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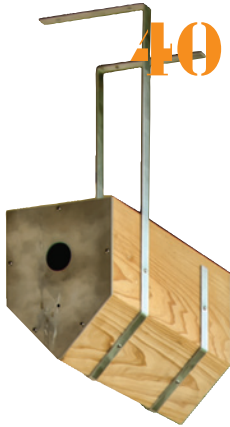
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## Building Together

by Catherine Gavin, Editor

**W**orking closely with Larry Paul Fuller over the course of the last six weeks, I have come to appreciate the satisfying collaboration that goes

into building the project that is *Texas Architect*. Expanding upon Stephen Sharpe's legacy, Larry has guided this magazine in a new direction that embraces a larger design dialogue. With this transformation has come a new focus on the impact of architecture in shaping communities and influencing people's daily lives. A successful effort was made to broaden the discussion and illustrate the importance of the public impact of projects such as the Lubbock Arts District, while also consistently featuring more conventionally spectacular design such as the Asia House in Houston.

As an illuminating record of architecture in Texas, the content has evolved and will continue to present architecture within the context of allied fields and considerations such as urban design, landscape architecture, historic preservation, planning, and sustainability. This richer dialogue hinges upon critical analysis of the role of design in the built environment and its ability to connect people to places and to one another.

The effort to build *Texas Architect* requires not only the contribution of the committees, writers, and staff dedicated to this publication, but also that of architects throughout the state. As Larry Paul Fuller departs to refocus on his prior

commitments, I thank him for his help with my transition, his gracious guidance, his sense of humor, and his fundamental contribution to this issue. Larry has been a welcome presence and influence at 500 Chicon over the last ten months,

*With this transformation has come a new focus on the impact of architecture in shaping communities and influencing people's daily lives.*

and the Society is deeply grateful for his valuable and generous contribution. We look forward to continuing his good work.

**In this edition,** we have included a collection of houses that illustrates the extensive collaboration necessary for an effective relationship between architect and client. This dialogue results in homes that are true to the ideas and desires of the people who inhabit them. Distinct lifestyles and budgets are fully expressed in the house that grew around a kitchen; in a modest, transportable home; a playful pool house; a house that embraces a tree; and in a collection of homes that resolved an important need for urban housing. ■

*Catherine Gavin*

*New housing in the Jubilee Park neighborhood of Dallas was developed with community input during six collaborative design meetings.*





# Contributors



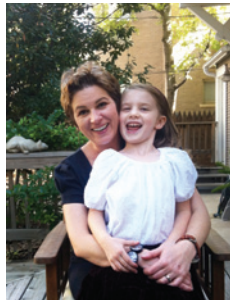
**Larry Paul Fuller** says his major highlights for 2012 included attending the Masters tournament in Augusta (as documented by this pose at the clubhouse) and being appointed guest editor of *Texas Architect* for four issues — a true full-circle experience after serving as editor from 1973 to 1985. See his contribution to this issue, “Dot’s Place,” on page 24.



**Joe Self, AIA** says he’s enjoyed writing articles for *Texas Architect* over the last few issues. The research and discussions that were part of the writing have given him a chance to think anew about design and architecture. Page 22 begins with his latest thoughts on the art of dwelling.



**Ben Koush, AIA** is an architect in Houston. He took time off from writing his book about modern architecture to speak to Donna Kacmar, FAIA, on page 30 about the Houston house she designed to be potentially transported to the country.



**Canan Yetmen** is a writer based in Austin. 20 years ago, on her first day as an intern for an art book publisher, she was asked to send a fax to Philip Johnson, a career highlight she has only recently removed from her resume. Most days she is at her desk writing, but sometimes she escapes to the hike and bike trail, or to whatever is on Turner Classic Movies. Read her thoughts on a tiny house for bikes on page 68.



**Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA** a project designer with Laguarda Low, takes inspiration from many sources, from the work of Mansilla Tunon to the sounds of The Walkmen, but nothing has been of more influence and inspiration to him than his father, who through 42 years with McDonnell Douglas and Boeing showed him what comes with passion, persistence, and the appreciation of opportunity. Michael explores the importance of Gurley Place in Dallas on page 46.



**Lawrence Connolly, AIA** is a frequent contributor to *Texas Architect* and was in the School of Architecture at UT in the 70’s when he bought *Geometry in Architecture* — *Pioneer Texas Buildings* by Clovis Heimsath, FAIA. He got Clovis to sign his copy of the book while gathering information on the writer/architect/painter for the article on page 60.



**Eurico R. Francisco, AIA** finds delight in spotting great architecture in unusual places, public or private, in large or small sizes, deliberate or accidental. He writes about the Wildwood Pool House on page 36 and can attest that the pool house is sheer delight and that there is nothing accidental about it.



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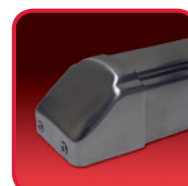
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**Far left** Lawrence V. Lof (right), president and CEO of the Gorgas Science Foundation, addressing tour participants at Rancho San Tomás. **Left** Architects Roberto Ruiz, AIA, (left) and Mario Sánchez (center) with Rolando L. Garza, chief archeologist, National Park Service, at Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park.

## LRGV/AIA Chapter Conference Tours Cultural Landscapes of the Texas-Mexico Border

by Stephen Fox

The twentieth annual Building Communities Conference of the Lower Río Grande Valley chapter of the AIA in late September 2012, began with a tour exploring the cultural landscapes of the Texas-Mexico border.

The tour commenced at the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park. The 3,400-acre park was the site of the first battle of the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-48. The landscapes reflect what much of the lower Río Grande Valley was like before the twentieth century. Rolando L. Garza, National Park Service archeologist and chief of resource management, guided participants through the Gulf coastal plain terrain, the Tamaulipecan Thorn Woodland vegetation, and the Río Grande delta. Garza explained that the term “resaca” is unique in Brownsville. It refers to the oxbow lakes that are remnants of the channels of the Río Grande River. They aid flood control and water storage as well as encourage a diverse marine and plant life. He noted that although twentieth-century road construction lowered the water table, the area has experienced relatively minimal disruption since the time of the battle.

From Palo Alto, the tour moved downriver from Brownsville to Rancho Santo Tomás. It is the only tropical ecosystem in Texas according to biologist and building conservator Lawrence V. Lof of the Gorgas Science Foundation. At the 33-acre Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Lof explained the impact of modern infrastructure on the landscape. The old-growth riparian forests

of Sabal Texana palm trees and Texas Ebony trees, both now protected in the sanctuary, once covered more than 60,000 acres along the Río Grande River. Participants were also able to see the restoration progress of the turreted Victorian Rabb-Starck House of 1892, which will become the foundation’s headquarters once Lof has completed the rehabilitation.

En route to the next destination, the tour passed through the neighborhoods of Brownsville’s Southmost area, which exemplify familiar domestic patterns including fenced yards, home-

*In the historic center of downtown, Market Square, the group toured transnational landscapes as represented by buildings influenced by traditional Mexican architecture.*

made shrines, and lack of grass lawns.

In the historic center of downtown, Market Square, the group toured transnational landscapes as represented by buildings influenced by traditional Mexican architecture. Lof showed the group his progress uncovering the original brick walls of Brownsville’s City Market House of 1852. It is the oldest continually occupied city hall in Texas. Its presence on the square illustrates the transformation of the gridded Anglo-American town plan of 1848 to accommodate a traditional Mexican plaza in 1850. Brownsville entrepreneur George Ramírez guided the group through the Almacenes Fernandez. Constructed from 1890 to 1894, the one-story brick structure is L-shaped in plan and wraps a traditional Mexican patio. Marianne Sánchez showed the group through

the expansive Juan H. Fernández Building. Built in 1884, it is a two-story brick merchant’s house with retail on the ground floor, and an unusually expansive interior garden patio. Peter L. Goodman, Historic Downtown director for the City of Brownsville, and José A. Gavito, Jr., heritage officer of the City of Brownsville, were the group’s hosts at Market Square.

After lunch, the tour turned to more recent landscapes. Patrick M. Burchfield, director of the Gladys Porter Zoo, gave the group a tour of one of the state’s most famous zoos. A didactic landscape, it was a pioneering example of a zoo without cages when it opened in 1971. Designed by Phelps, Simmons & Associates of San Antonio, the zoo also has more recent architectural interventions by Roberto Ruiz, AIA. The tour explored the mid-twentieth-century suburban strip along Central Boulevard as a cultural landscape. The city built a central library there in 1994 (F&S Partners and SHW Group). Brownsville Architect Calvin Walker of Walker-Pérez Associates and Jerry Hedgecock, director of the city’s Public Information Services Department, escorted the group through a new computer lab.

The last stop was an exotic tropical paradise landscape associated with the resaca ecology. The destination was a one-story ranch-style house that Brownsville architect Javier Huerta, AIA, of Origo Works transformed into a residential pavilion with modern Mexican overtones. The seductive beauty of this landscape and the idyllic way that Huerta integrated the architecture and the environment made this a compelling place to conclude the tour of border cultural landscapes.

Stephen Fox is a fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas.





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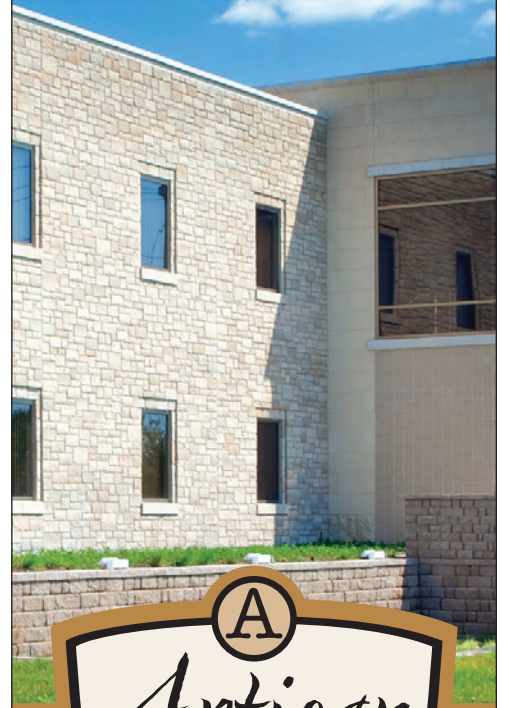
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## Michael Van Valkenburgh on Austin's Waller Creek

With construction of the Waller Creek tunnel well under way in Austin, the \$146.5-million municipal effort to more efficiently manage the flow of water through the long-neglected flood plain has also afforded a new vision for the creek and the city. The transformation of Waller Creek, which is the largest project of its kind in the nation, will impact 28 acres of downtown and proposes to link disparate areas of Austin with a dynamic linear park that winds its way from 15th Street to Lady Bird Lake. Five distinct nodes, the Lattice, Grove, Refuge, Confluence, and the Poppy, will provide a variety of landscape and programmatic experiences in the park.

Austin is a city of many parks; the revitalization of Waller Creek will be a welcome contribution to a community that cherishes green space and water. The New York City landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh spoke briefly with *Texas Architect* about the winning proposal for Waller Creek that his firm developed in conjunction with Thomas Phifer and Partners.

### What attracted your team to the Waller Creek competition?

Several things, including the creative vibrancy of Austin as a city, the uniqueness of the assignment (especially the implications of the tunnel project and its impact on the creek hydrology), the fact that Austin still needs the equivalent of a Central Park (and that Waller Creek seems to provide the best opportunity for this). Also, Don Stastny runs a good competition and works hard to assure fairness. Last and most important, the impressive organization that is the Waller Creek Conservancy — great projects have great clients.

### How do you see the project unfolding?

Our scheme is directly responsive to the ways in which the tunnel project becomes physically manifest in the creek. In fact, the three inlets and the outlet structure at Lady Bird Lake structure the idea of a “Chain of Parks” for us. Since the tunnel is being built now, the first step is to try and catch up to that process, and to do what is possible to connect and adapt the ideas hatched in our initial competition entry to the many projects around Waller Creek that are now in process. We will also work closely with the Conservancy and the city to develop a phasing plan and general cost estimate. We certainly do not have any pre-assumptions that what was drawn

up as part of the competition will be exactly what is executed — cities (especially cities growing as fast as Austin) are far too complex for the project to unfold in that way.

### Tell us about the proposal's considerations for droughts and how this might influence the design concept.

The tunnel project is an unusual opportunity for Waller Creek. While its purpose is to mitigate the destructive impacts of flooding in the corridor, it also provides a constant flow of water to the creek throughout the year. In terms of

*In terms of planting and habitat within the channel itself, Waller Creek may not be as susceptible to the effects of the severe droughts that have occurred in the region over the last few years.*

planting and habitat within the channel itself, Waller Creek may not be as susceptible to the effects of the severe droughts that have occurred in the region over the last few years. That said, responsible water management will always be a priority, especially for the upland park areas that abut the creek. As we develop a planting palette, we will be carefully considering drought-tolerant and native species appropriate to an urban park program, as well as available and anticipated maintenance needs. For example, we have worked on several projects where different kinds

of lawn seed mixes can be calibrated for anticipated frequency of use and available resources for care and maintenance.

### Talk briefly about the design for the Poppy Pavilion and what types of materials you envision using.

The Poppy is intended to serve as performance-gathering space and be an icon for Waller Creek. Its form is suggestive of a Texas wildflower from a distance, and becomes more abstract and cloud-like from within. The thin steel polished columns and ever-changing color of the translucent “shell” canopy structure were inspired by the clouds and rains of the Texas foothills.

### Can you describe an element of a similar project that you are very happy with and why you think it is successful?

Right off the bat, the stone wall in Teardrop Park in New York City comes to mind. It is certainly a first cousin of our proposal for the walls of the Grove, and I think it has become a much-loved part of downtown New York City. However, for the Grove, we imagine something quite different materially. In the competition entry, we proposed that the wall would be cast out of concrete with limestone forms. This means not building the walls out of limestone, per se, though this is still a preliminary idea. We also see the vertical configuration of the wall as a means to create a shaded and perhaps even moist microclimate to provide respite in Austin's hot summer days. ■



RENDERINGS COURTESY MICHAEL VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES INC. AND THOMAS PHIFER AND PARTNERS





## Deck Park Opens as New Dallas Landmark

Klyde Warren Park, the deck park over Dallas' Woodall Rodgers Freeway, officially opened the last weekend in October, attracting more than 44,000 celebratory visitors. Designed by the Office of James Burnett, the 5.2-acre attraction that has become Dallas' newest landmark creates a welcome urban green space over the recessed freeway between Pearl and St. Paul Streets in the center of the city. Among the aspirations of designers and downtown advocates is for the park to promote increased pedestrian, trolley, and bicycle use between Uptown, Downtown and the adjacent Arts District, contributing to a more walkable city center.

**Bisected by the** existing Olive Street bridge, the park is organized by a pedestrian promenade that begins at its southwestern corner, drawing downtown visitors through the park past a botanical garden, a children's garden with an interactive water feature, a reading room, and an event lawn. A large public plaza connects the restaurant terrace, the performance pavilion, and the casual take-out pavilion to the street. The pedestrian promenade continues beyond the plaza and connects to a series of intimate garden courtyards, a dog park, and a signature interactive water feature that anchors the park along Pearl Street.

"Klyde" will create a front lawn for the surrounding cultural institutions, including the AT&T Performing Arts Center, Dallas Museum of Art, Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Hall, Nasher Sculpture Center, Trammell & Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art, Booker T. Washington High School for the Visual & Perform-

ing Arts, and the new Perot Museum of Nature and Science. It is anticipated that increased foot traffic from the park will serve as a catalyst for the vitality of the Arts District and for street-level business opportunities.

The \$110-million project was funded through a public-private partnership. Public support included \$20 million in bond funds from the City

*"Klyde" will create a front lawn for the surrounding cultural institutions, and serve as a catalyst for the vitality of the Arts District and street-level business opportunities.*

of Dallas, \$20 million in highway funds from the state, and \$16.7 million in stimulus funds. The balance of funding is through individual donations directly to the Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation, including a \$10-million gift from Dallas executive and philanthropist Kelcy Warren, who named the park in honor of his son, fourth-grader Klyde Warren. The Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation will operate and manage the park, which is planned to be a hub of activity with four to five events per day. Programming will be free and ranges from yoga and bootcamp to movie nights and outdoor concerts.

Construction on the deck — a feat of engineering and design — began in October 2009. The sustainable landscaping that followed includes 37 native plant species and 322 trees, transforming a former open freeway into a natural urban oasis. ■

## Calendar

### 'Sacred Spaces of Texas' at ArCH

Jan. 13

[www.aiahouston.org](http://www.aiahouston.org)

The Architecture Center Houston (ArCH) hosts "Sacred Spaces of Texas." The exhibit includes 36 examples of religious architecture located throughout Texas. The buildings included range from Spanish missions to the painted churches of Central Texas. Mosques, Buddhist and Hindu temples, intimate spaces, mega spaces, and traditional and non-traditional spaces are all featured.

### Advocates for Architecture Day

Jan. 29

[www.texasarchitects.org](http://www.texasarchitects.org)

The Texas Society of Architects hosts Advocates for Architecture Day at the State Capitol. The event is expected to attract at least 200 architects from around Texas for individual constituent-legislator conferences.



### DAF Lecture Series: John Stilgoe

Feb. 13

[www.dallasarchitectureforum.org](http://www.dallasarchitectureforum.org)

The Dallas Architecture Forum continues its 2012-13 Lecture Series with John Stilgoe, landscape architecture professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. The event takes place at The Magnolia Theater, West Village, at 7 p.m.

### Call for Presentations

Feb. 15

[www.texasarchitects.org](http://www.texasarchitects.org)

Texas Architects is seeking Continuing Education presentation submittals for its 74th Annual Convention and Design Expo in Fort Worth, Nov. 7-9. More information is available online; submittal deadline is Feb. 15.

### Design Symposium: Collections

Feb. 22-24

[www.texasarchitects.org](http://www.texasarchitects.org)

The Texas Architects Design Committee hosts its second annual Design Conference, "Collections," in Dallas. The three-day event features speakers Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi of Weiss Manfredi Architects in New York and tours of private homes, offices, and recently completed high-profile projects in Dallas.





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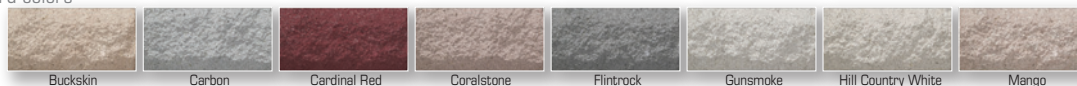
architect

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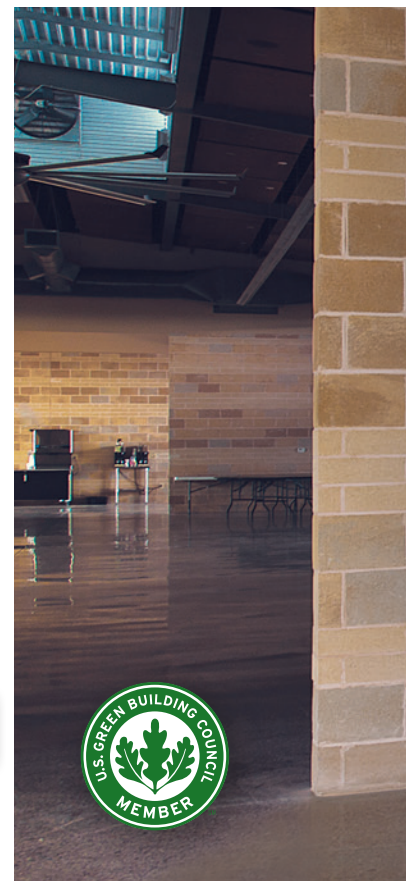
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*— John Grable, FAIA*





# Recognition



## TASA/TASB

The 2012 Exhibit of School Architecture sponsored by the Texas Association of School Administration (TASA) and the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Convention awarded the Caudill Award to Lady Bird Johnson Middle School in Irving designed by Corgan Associates.

### Caudill Award Winner

#### 1 Lady Bird Johnson Middle School Corgan Associates

It is the first net zero school in the state and at 152,250-sf, the campus is the largest net zero educational facility in the country. The building serves approximately 900 students and incorporates energy-reducing systems with goals to reduce energy consumption over 50 percent through the use of geothermal HVAC, passive solar interior daylighting, an efficient building envelope, a high-efficiency kitchen and advanced controls systems monitoring. The school uses wireless laptop technologies for all computing needs to further reduce the electrical and HVAC loads in the building.

The energy reductions within the facility are enhanced by solar and wind harvesting provided on the site and the roof. Solar panels sustain the majority of the energy needs for the building and are designed so that, over the course of a year, the energy produced will equal the energy consumed, netting zero.

### Honorable Mentions

#### 2 The Kathlyn Joy Gilliam Collegiate Academy in Dallas SHW Group

A high school tailored to prepare first generation college students for academic success, this 106,000-sf building was designed by SHW Group to emulate the collegiate experience. It is made up of a series of academic and social spaces organized around a central commons area. The two-story facility houses the

eleventh and twelfth graders on the first floor, allowing for more freedom with informal learning areas. The younger students have a more structured, controlled environment above. Instead of traditional “home rooms,” faculty offices are located in a “perch,” a large, cubic space suspended on the second floor.

The school accommodates 500 students and is sited on a 10-acre field adjacent to a nature preserve south of Dallas. The building is certified by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS), the nation’s first green building rating program especially designed for K-12 schools.

#### Sarah Hollenstein Career and Technology Center VLK Architects

Located in the Eagle Mountain-Saginawa Independent School District, this school prepares students for emerging, high-tech occupations. The building’s floor plan organizes all of the departments around a central commons space with an amphitheater and seating area that serves as a grand staircase to the second floor.

#### Shadow Oaks Elementary School Pfluger Associates

This school is designed with unique spaces for distinct learning environments including pods with movable tables and chairs and niches or fort-like spaces under the stairs in the corridors. The building replaced an existing school in Spring Branch. ■ □





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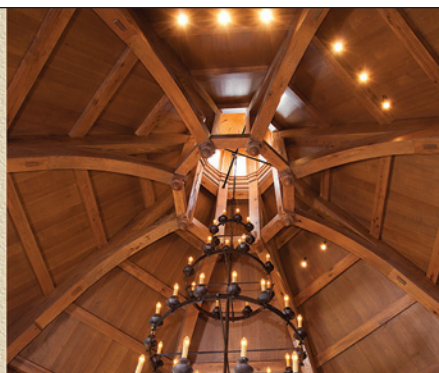


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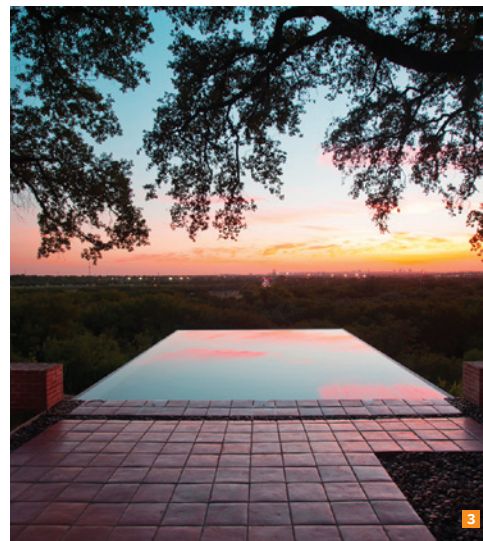


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# Recognition



## AIA San Antonio Design Awards

Recipients of the 2012 AIA San Antonio Design Awards were announced in November 2012.

Jurors for the annual competition were Thomas Hacker, FAIA, of Thomas Hacker Architects in Portland, Oregon; Brian Phillips, AIA, LEED AP, of Interface Studio Architects in Philadelphia; and Jennifer Yoos, AIA, of VJAA in Minneapolis. Selecting from 45 entries representing 24 San Antonio firms, the jury recognized three projects with Honor Awards.

### Honor Awards

#### 1 Cross Timbers

Lake|Flato Architects

A ranch house and corporate retreat in Lipan, Texas, Cross Timbers is composed of four independent structures that navigate a tree-lined ridge. Each building has a specific function: a primary residence; guest house; game room and pavilion; and a wine cellar and overlook. Breezes are highlighted by the porches, dog-trot decks, and walkways that connect the individual buildings to one another and the landscape. The project uses 100 percent closed-pond-loop geothermal HVAC technology. The finishes recall modest vernacular elements in the region and include steel-pipe fencing, wood-clad barns, and corrugated-metal shade structures.

#### 2 Raymond Russell Park, Projects 1 & 2

Diane Hays, FAIA

Architecture students designed and constructed picnic facilities and an educational nature trail for the Raymond Russell Park in San Antonio. The team was charged with designing simple forms built with recycled materials and common detailing, suitable for construction by volunteer work crews with little construction experience. The design takes cues from the debris piles that littered the frequently flooded site. The trail, a crushed granite path, circles the 5-acre site and links the decks and picnic areas. Recycled pipe structures define the trail entrance and are used for periodic shade along the path. An existing slab serves as the site for

informal classrooms. The recycled steel-plate walls add spatial definition and provide vertical counterpoints to the broad horizontal site.

#### 3 Rockridge Gardens

Tobin Wells Smith, AIA

A 1958 house designed by Texas master O'Neil Ford formerly stood as a pristine object in an underdeveloped garden full of potential. The new landscape design extends the lines of the house to the grounds and stitches the interior and exterior together by animating the variety of interstitial and peripheral spaces the footprint of the house provides. A new central patio — the runway terrace — is the focal point and maximizes the central axis of the house from the primary entry through the glass core to a new pool that reaches for the horizon. The design incorporates the 60-ft cliff at the edge of the site into the daily experience of the house while also creating intimate courts from which to enjoy the gardens.

### Merit Awards

#### dos Diez

Candid Rogers, AIA

#### Health Services Building at Arizona State University

Lake|Flato Architects

#### Robert J. & Helen C. Kleberg South Texas Heritage Center at the Witte Museum

Ford Powell & Carson Architects & Planners ■ □





## AIA El Paso Design Awards

Recipients of the 2012 AIA El Paso Design Awards were announced in November 2012. The following three projects received Honor Awards.

### 1 El Paso County Family Youth and Services Center Wright & Dalbin Architects, Inc.

The 21,000-sf building houses county, state, and community-based departments and organizations that assess the psychiatric, medical, general hygiene, and dental needs of underage clients and their families. A central atrium unifies the offices of the various disciplines. Bright colors on the facades and throughout the interior spaces provide a defiant alternative to traditional finishes in community clinics.

### 2 Albert Bacon Fall Mansion ARTchitecture

A meticulous restoration of the two-story Classical Revival mansion in El Paso that was home to Albert Bacon Fall was completed by ARTchitecture. Located in a historic district, the city seized the property in 2007 and invested two million dollars in the restoration and rehabilitation effort.

### E.G. Chayo Community Center Alvidrez Architecture, Inc.

A former firehouse was rehabilitated as a 3,200-sf community facility featuring a sleek and vibrant primary interior space where children can “socialize, learn, dream, and experiment.” ■



## John Staub Awards

The Institute of Classical Architecture & Art (ICAA) recognized projects across the state for their achievements and contributions to preserving and advancing the classical tradition in architecture, urbanism, and the allied arts. The 2012 John Staub Awards for Residential Architecture were presented for the following five projects.

### Rancho Del Cielo Michael G. Imber Architects, San Antonio

Rancho del Cielo presents a compelling and elegant vernacular solution inspired by the best West Texas traditions. Constructed upon the site of a 1940s ranching outpost lost to fire in 1995, the project successfully addressed the challenge of designing a residence twice the scale of the original while maintaining the delicate relationship to the landscape and existing compound structures.

### 1 Casa de las Lomas Michael G. Imber Architects, San Antonio

Built into a hillside overlooking Austin, the Casa de las Lomas is organized around a central courtyard with public rooms on the upper level. The double-height concrete dome of the library connects the upper level to the lower level where private rooms are organized around a secondary courtyard. Rough-hewn, decorative tile and traditional plastering techniques are integral to the interior finishes.

### 2 Pedernales Ranch House Don B. McDonald Architect, San Antonio

The structures of the Pedernales Ranch House



are each composed of a single room with direct access to exterior porches that provide wonderful connections between the individual spaces. Entirely clad in stone and unfinished cypress, the house is simple and spartan in detailing, but materially rich.

### 3 Boot Ranch House Don B. McDonald Architect, San Antonio

An architectural palette displaying English Romanesque roots, refined stonework, and native materials all combine to allow this homestead to fit comfortably into its unique region of Gillespie County. The residence is closely tied to its surroundings through the landscape design, which is composed of intimate pathways, grassy lawns, and a “tree-trunk” trellis.

### Bonney Brier Residence & Gardens Curtis & Windham Architects, Houston

This Houston residence shows ties to a rural Texas vernacular. The variety in scale and detail of the bracketed porch supports and eave details, along with the natural texture of the wood siding and brick, are unified with a coat of whitewash. The effect of the composition and materials suggests alterations and enlargements of the residence over time. ■ ■



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## The windCatcher and prairieHouse

Specht Harpman Architects

Residential design is increasingly taking into account questions of sustainability and how to move forward in a more harmonious manner with the environment. The Austin firm Specht Harpman Architects proposes passive systems for two very different dwellings in arid climates. The windCatcher looks to ancient traditions while the prairieHouse reimagines a former Texaco station.

Designed specifically for its desert climate, the windCatcher is inspired by the passive cooling techniques of traditional Persian architecture. The 1200-sf home is situated above a reservoir, with the majority of the inhabitable space below ground. The building is composed of a series of lofty towers that function as ventilators guiding the breeze into the interior. Water features in the path of the air flow allow for evaporative cooling. Additional low-pressure zones bring cool air into the house from vents near the water below. The large-surface-area thermal mass of the building as well as the recessed gardens and pools around the home help to eliminate extreme variations in the interior temperature.

The prairieHouse proposes the adaptive reuse of a former service station as an 800-sf single-family home. The design was inspired by the abandoned mid-century gas stations that dot



the plains of Texas and Oklahoma. It relies on a broad roof that supports the home below it as well as the diminutive wheat field planted upon it. Two towers project from the roof allowing for passive convective ventilation throughout the home. Consistent with its previous garage use, the carport has electric cables to recharge the cars of the post-petroleum world. ■







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Michael Malone Architects
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This issue on Residential Design explores the multiple dimensions of the term “dwelling.” As introduced in the opening essay, there is an art to dwelling and a magic to certain spaces within a home. Architects are a resource for the creation of these spaces and it is their understanding of the clients’ desires that can ultimately result in these unique elements or resting points in a house.

The following articles illustrate houses that connect with their sites and respond to the specific lifestyles of the individual homeowners. They represent a diversity of design solutions for the common quest of creating a home.

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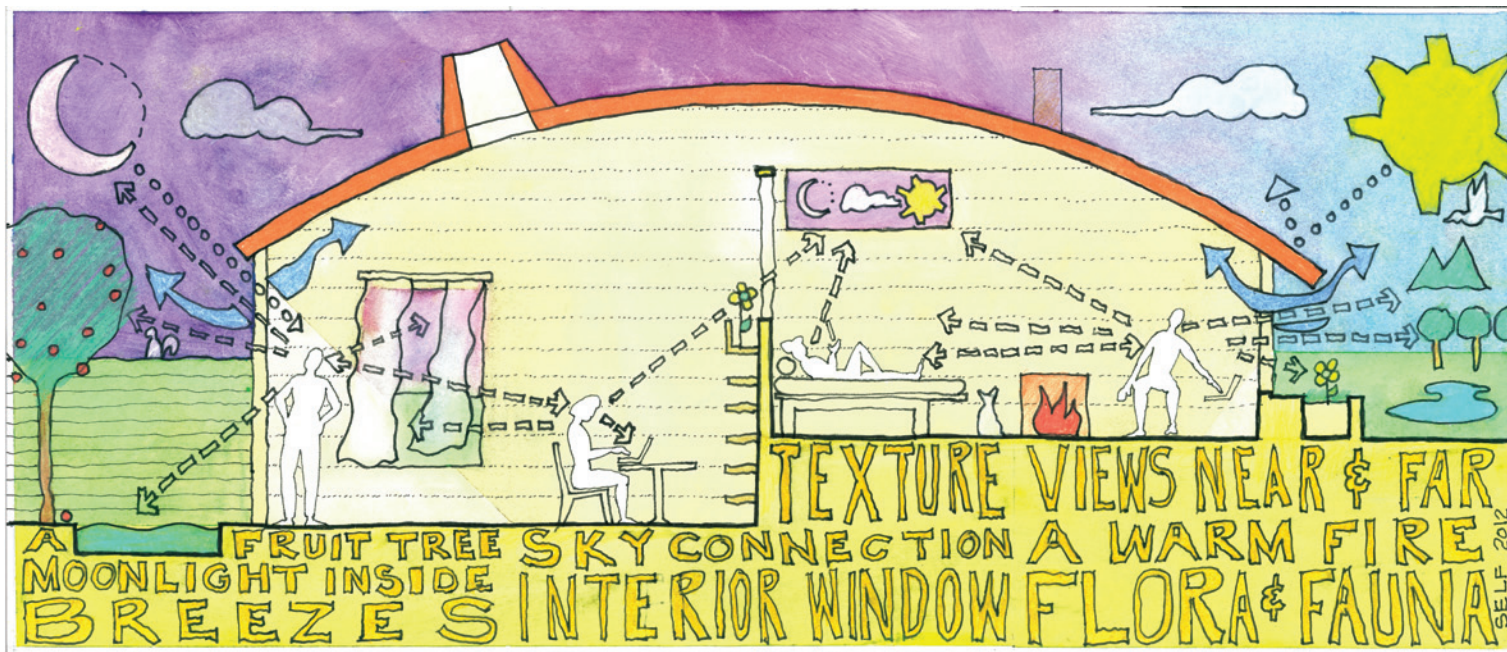
**Place Matters**

Gurley Place at Jubilee Park, Dallas

buildingcommunityWORKSHOP

*Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA*





## Dwelling: To Have or to Be

by Joe Self, AIA

**P**eople looking to build a house, even the financially comfortable and educated, seldom hire an architect because architects haven't done a good job of communicating their value. Part of this stems from the difficulty of describing services for the complex tasks of design and construction. More important, architects haven't taken on the job of making conceptual ideas clearly compatible with living needs.

Architecture is practiced within a culture of consumption so pervasive as to be almost invisible. That, taken with the pressures assumed by a system that rewards market conformance, results in a culture of mediocre dwellings. Banal houses are often compensated for with greater square footage, freighted symbols, and technological amenities. This can happen in so-called traditional or modern houses. In a rush to meet the client's stated or assumed needs, having often trumps being.

**One might pry open** the writings of Fromm, Bachelard, Heidegger, and Alexander to better understand dwelling. There are helpful moments in those writings, but a more prosaic route to understanding is possible by asking people what dwelling means to them. I sent the following invitation to friends and acquaintances, mostly non-architects:

Is there a place or experience in your own dwelling (or one from your past) that is special to you? If so, can you describe the physical characteristics and how that place makes you feel?

The responses were interesting. Here are a few excerpts:

When I was a child, there was a window seat that ... had coziness on the one hand because it was a small, separate space. On the other hand, it was vast in the way I was able to look out at the world from the window. [It] was one place where I could see trees for a long ways. — Kathleen C.

I could sit at the window on any night and watch the world go by. [The garage apartment] had a tiny kitchen with a breakfast room down a step. The bedroom was down a step from the front room at the front corner with windows all around .... — Matt S.

[I look] out my double window and take in the nature about my back yard and wooded area. She often plans her planting with my view in mind. — Charles T.

I have one comfortable chair, lots of books and legal pads, and a couple of bookcases ... [with] books ... stacked on the floor and coffee tables ... [Being there is] like coming up for air, only it feels like dropping down deep into the clear, simple [and the] profound. — Name withheld

The big, main room was all windows and wherever you were in the cottage you could always look outside .... I knew I would slip into the thick cotton linens every night. I knew it would smell like coffee, pine, porridge, vegetables from the garden, bonfires, and roses. — Tara P.

It is a simple open space with views of the garden to the left and right. The garden feels like it is part of the



house. — Michael K.

[Our porch] serves as conversation pit, quiet time with the trees, an observation point for the neighborhood people traffic, cigar bar, regular bar, point of escape .... The ceiling is high enough so as not to constrict the space but low enough to remain intimate. A large “craftsman” type window adds to the feeling of the porch being an extension of the living space. — Joe H.

[There] is something quite magical about being in one’s living space in the late afternoon/early evening, with all the lights off, and being aware of the changing intensity and color of the light. — Les H.

[My] little flower bed out by the shed flourished. A moon vine went berserk and covered a big arbor made of two-by-fours outside the kitchen door. I felt it belonged to me and I belonged to it. [It] was comfortable, cozy, and warm. This dwelling place hugged me. — Sophia T.

[My] favorite place ... was one that allowed me to enjoy the outside from the inside ... a place with large picture windows .... I also love a large open space that encompasses a small cozy “me” place. [The] open floor plans allow us to feel that we’re in the same room and we are all together. — Lisa M.

My living room is my comfort zone .... [It has high] ceilings, heavy elaborate dentil moulding, tall walls for art ... paintings, architectural artifacts, soapstone carvings, vintage magic posters, Leann’s geisha-ware collection, pre-Columbian pottery, etc. I feel real good. — Bob A.

**The recurrent themes** of these dwelling stories include intimacy, shelter, views, and connection to the outside world. Using the stories as a touchstone, a number of rubrics can be developed as a help in thinking about the design of dwellings.

Here are a few in no particular order:

- Address the other four senses — the tactile, the audible, scent, and even taste.
- Provide views beyond the property if possible. Views within the property are essential.
- Establish a rich relationship to the landscape.
- Allow for moments of enclosed repose. Non-architects might call this “coziness.”
- Connect to the sky to mark the time of day and the change in the seasons.
- Enliven interior vistas using furniture settings, diagonal views, and interior windows.

**The rubrics listed** above might add insight to a study of the photographs in this issue of *Texas*

*Architect*, since it is assumed that the daily living patterns, budget, and other necessities are satisfied in these projects.

The Wildwood Pool House connects to light from above with a roof-mounted lantern and to the landscape with terraced planted areas. The ceilings offer a textured surface and the outdoor shower allows a close connection to the wood plank details matching the surrounding fence.

The Vanguard Way House offers a literal connection to the world outside with eave-mounted birdhouses and a human perch atop a cylindrical tower. Unstained wood at the interior provides texture while high windows offer views to the sky.

The Fisher Street House creates a relationship to its site by hovering over it and promising to be transported away at a moment’s notice. This approach, ironically, heightens one’s awareness of the site and creates a kind of anticipated memory. The combination of high- and low-cost

*There’s no question that ideas and spatial expression are a triumph of the human mind and should be the area of an architect’s expertise.*

materials with a range of textures invites the touch of the hand.

Gurley Place at Jubilee Park, a collective dwelling place, has a greater range of issues to address that extends to urban design through community involvement. The porches address the street and the mid-block path. Low walls and planting beds create a spatial and a literal connection to the landscape.

The Brandt House exploits large areas of glass for views to the immediate landscape and the sky. The open plan encourages connections between spaces defined by intimate furniture groupings. The contrast of smooth and rough textures creates a lively play of light across the building — inside and out. The architect/client relationship described in the Brandt Residence article is perhaps the most valuable insight into how that project came into being.

Each of these houses invites questions about how to dwell and how to talk about dwelling. It might be useful for architects to consider profiling projects on their websites by including occupant interviews after a year or so of living in the houses. Candid photos of the houses could

create an entirely new way of exploring dwelling patterns.

Unless architects want to continue to be excluded, we need to develop a clear way of thinking about how to add value to the housing market. If builders and contractors focus on low-priced, larger-sized, and amenity-laden construction, then what architects offer must be made just as tangible.

There’s no question that ideas and spatial expression are a triumph of the human mind and should be the area of an architect’s expertise. But this doesn’t have to exclude dwelling and it doesn’t have to be reserved for the highbrow. Most architects probably value authenticity through experiencing the world and not by arranging symbols and amenities, but we have to work harder to express the value of authenticity to others. Sharing knowledge and deciding to be a co-explorer with our clients might work.

How we make ourselves and our clients more aware could include:

- Buying a book for your client that describes ways of seeing. John Berger’s book *Ways of Seeing* is excellent, but we frequently gift non-architects with *The Happiness of Architecture* by Alain de Botton.
- Exploring buildings with your client — your projects or the work of other architects.
- Internalizing the living patterns of your client by repeating back to them how they want to live.
- Noticing the world like a 4-year old.
- Guiding clients toward being instead of having.

**Being versus having** is a concept that opens up considerations of authenticity. If an analogy is allowed, consider the footwear of a working cowboy juxtaposed with that of a dandy. Highly finished loafers may impress, but the spur-strapped boot, lined with the evidence of frank use, carries a kind of humble authority. This doesn’t suggest ranch or barn architecture: spurs should be left on the porch and hats taken off in the house. But the cowboy boot might remind us of being versus having. This could reveal the everyday workings of our clients — their imaginings and remembrances of dwelling moments for which they yearn.

Joe Self, AIA is the principal of FIRM817 in Fort Worth.





# Dot's Place

by Larry Paul Fuller

**Project** Dot Brandt House, Dallas

**Client** Dot Brandt

**Architect** Michael Malone Architects

**Design team** Michael Malone, AIA; Bob Borson, AIA; Richard Smith, AIA

**Photographer** Steven Vaughan





**F**or Dot Brandt and her architect, the enthralling pathway to a custom house was very much in sync with the language of Charles Moore, Gerald Allen, and Donlyn Lyndon in their book, *The Place of Houses*: “You bind the goods and trappings of your life together with your dreams to make a place that is uniquely your own.”

The odyssey began, prosaically enough, after Michael Malone, AIA, planted the obligatory jobsite sign at one of his residential projects near Dot’s former home in Dallas’ affluent Preston Hollow. Observing the house under construction, Dot was motivated to call the number on the sign in pursuit of a similar new house for herself. During their first meeting at Malone’s office, the connection was immediate. Talk of budgets and administrative matters soon gave way to the sharing of aspirations — dreams — for the house. And so began a very rewarding client engagement that would lead to a great house and, even more cherished, a great friendship.

*Talk of budgets and administrative matters soon gave way to the sharing of aspirations — dreams — for the house.*

In Malone’s own book, *The Architect’s Guide to Residential Design*, he refers to his clients as “patrons” who bring their own preconceptions to the table but who also have “taken a leap with me and ... allowed me latitude to explore ideas that I thought were important.” It is this adventurous dynamic between client and architect — venturing into unexplored realms together — that Malone finds so gratifying.

As a prolific and accomplished artist, with strong opinions about all things visual, Dot Brandt brought with her no shortage of ideas. But she found during the design process that she and Michael usually saw things the same way, at least eventually. “I can push and he can push,” she says.





**Previous spread** *A welcoming glass-walled entry is the exception on the otherwise mostly opaque elevations viewed from the street. The stone mass of the garage, at left, helps define an informal entry court. As throughout the house, the den makes generous accommodation for art.*

**Left** *Beginning with the living room at left, all the main spaces are open to the central rear courtyard.*

**Facing page** *Courtyard photo and section rendering show the “legs” of the U-shaped plan — the second-level studio above the bedroom at right, and the extra-height entry and living room at left. The generous use of clerestory windows extends to the stair that leads to the studio.*

“So I think of it as pushing together.” And the whole process was smoother than it might have been because the basic contours of the program were clear from the very beginning. Dot was a single, socially active, and sophisticated woman with three grown sons who was now living alone with her two dogs — a Rottweiler and a Great Dane. She no longer needed the 10,000-sf house where she had reared her boys, so she had acquired a nearby lot for a new home that would be tailored to support her life as an artist, as a frequent host to large gatherings of family and friends, and as an owner of very energetic large dogs.

Programmatically, Dot’s requirements translated into several types of space for well-defined functions:

- She would need a large studio space to facilitate a very active artistic life, including painting, weaving, photography, jewelry-making, and sculpture. “And I like room to squint at my work-in-progress from a distance,” Dot says.
- She would need kitchen and dining accommodations to facilitate large or small gatherings ranging from casual to more formal. “We all know that guests usually congregate in the kitchen,” Michael says. “So we embraced that reality by conceiving of a generous kitchen and bar as the heart of the house.”
- In addition to her own bedroom — and in defiance of local real estate protocol — Dot would require only one guest bedroom. “I just didn’t need all that extra space,” she says. “If there’s an overflow of guests, there’s a hotel just down the road. And that works real well.” (She is also quick to point out that a new owner could easily find spaces to convert into bedrooms if desired.)

*Approaching the house from the street, the entry is clearly discernable as a glass-box foyer that protrudes — lantern-like at night — above the typical roof height.*

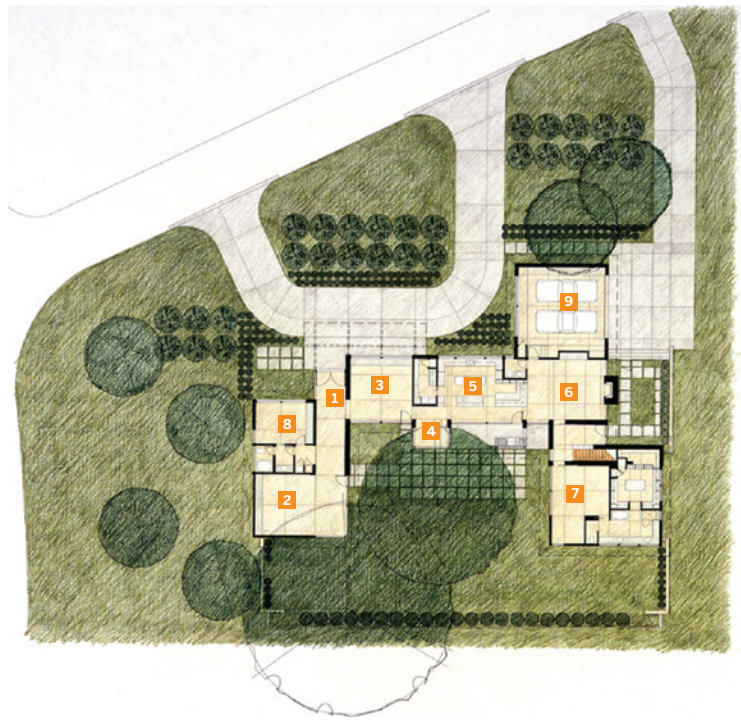
- Finally, in addition to a generous enclosed garage, Dot wanted a separate living room scaled to accommodate a piano and an existing arrangement of prized furniture. But beyond their list of spaces and functions, Dot and Michael could also envision an overarching aesthetic that seemed right: clean and contemporary forms; light-filled spaces with lots of glass; generous, gallery-like and carefully lit wall space and neutral finishes for the display of Dot’s art; and utilitarian materials that could endure the high levels of vulnerability posed by large dogs who would have the run of the house (along with two exotic Bengal cats).

**Given the specifics** of Dot’s corner lot, whose original structure had been demolished, the desired plan shape for the house revealed itself clearly. Because of the location of highly valued mature oak trees on the property and the desire to respect their broad canopies, “we saw a U-shaped plan from the get-go,” Dot recalls. So it was that the central house with its two wings formed a courtyard around the primary magnificent oak and, accordingly, the private side of the house became a series of glass window walls (constructed of mill-finish aluminum storefront) to celebrate the outward views and to bring the outside in. This format was conceived in stark





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SITE PLAN**
- 1 ENTRY
  - 2 LIVING
  - 3 DINING
  - 4 BREAKFAST
  - 5 KITCHEN
  - 6 DEN
  - 7 MASTER SUITE
  - 8 BEDROOM
  - 9 GARAGE



**Right** *The formal dining room — between the foyer and the kitchen area — seats 16 guests at two tables of eight.*

**Facing page** *Recognizing the reality that guests tend to congregate in the kitchen, a continuous perimeter counter provides a hospitality zone while meals are being prepared. A ribbon window facing the driveway allows Dot to monitor arrivals.*



contrast to the street side of the house, which is mostly solid mass punctuated by clerestory windows for security and privacy.

In keeping with the crisp, minimalist forms and flat roofs of the design that was emerging, Michael initially saw the house being constructed of concrete block — smooth, tautly modular, utilitarian, and suitably nontraditional for the dwelling place of an artist. But the use of limestone instead was promoted by one of Dot's acquaintances in the stone business, and that became the material of choice. The result is a pleasing juxtaposition of rough natural stone surfaces in a crisp context of white sheetrock, pet-friendly concrete floors, broad expanses of glass, and exterior painted steel panels. Michael did insist, however, that the limestone be kept vertically

*As heart of the house, an expansive kitchen area is bounded by a counter at which 10 guests can sit comfortably with cocktails while food preparation is under way.*

modular by cutting each variable-length stone a consistent eight inches high.

The experience of moving through the spaces defined by the U-shaped plan is a pleasant process of discovery. Approaching the house from the street, the entry is clearly discernable as a glass-box foyer that protrudes — lantern-like at night — above the typical roof height. Passing the guestroom discretely tucked away to the right, one proceeds through the

foyer-as-gallery space to the high-ceilinged living room, with its grand piano and large-scale art on generous walls.

Turning left from the entry, moving through the base of the U, the progression is through a formal dining room (with the less formal touch of two tables instead of one) and on into the kitchen as heart of the house. Here, Dot insisted on replicating a configuration from her ranch in Montana that provides an expansive kitchen area bounded by a counter at which 10 guests can sit comfortably with cocktails while food preparation is under way. Connected to the kitchen, and separated only by the bar, is the den with its fireplace and entertainment center.

The last leg of the U surrounding the courtyard is formed by the master suite with its studio above, the only upper-level room of the house. The bedroom area is suitably scaled for one person, although it is big enough to provide a zone for sleeping and one for sitting to enjoy views of the courtyard. Also included in the suite is a large bath with dressing area and two seasonal closets.

**The second level-studio** above, accessed by its own private foyer and stair, marks the point on the tour when Dot becomes most animated, for it is here that her calling as an artist is answered day by day. With continuous windows running around the perimeter on four sides, the room has the feel of a large tree house with views of leaves and dappled light. Scattered all around are Dot's projects in progress — a large easel with partially completed canvas, a set-up for scanning painted images on aluminum, a pile of stones to be crafted into jewelry. French doors open to access a large





terrace overlooking the courtyard below that is seemingly a superior venue for a cocktail or fine glass of red. (The new focal point of the courtyard is a pool and sculptural fountain installed to replace the iconic red oak that was lost to recent summer heat).

Dot loves essentially everything about the house that she and Michael created in sweet collaboration. “We took a lot of measurements, so we knew the sizes of the furniture and things we were dealing with, and we scaled the house accordingly,” she says. “And I love bringing the stone inside, and the easy concrete floors. I love the textures and all the glass. And it’s so utterly satisfying to have something that is so right for your life ... that fits you like a glove ... and to see how simple it is to go do this or go do that ... and it flows so nicely because everything is where it needs to be and people can overflow to the outside. It works like it was supposed to.”

Michael recently told Dot something about her house that she had never known before: the dimensions of the living room make it a perfect golden section, meaning the rectangle of the footprint and the vertical cross-section of the room are identical. Dot immediately agreed that those kinds of compositional things matter and she can sense the fact that everything about her house is so carefully proportioned. But ask her what matters most about the house — ask her why she loves it so much — and she won’t lead with proportions or materials or artful design. “This house is me,” she will say. “It’s me.”

Larry Paul Fuller is a recent guest editor of *Texas Architect* and a principal of fd2s inc., a wayfinding consultancy in Austin.



**Contractor** FBE Construction

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL:** Stenstrom Schneider

**Resources** **CONCRETE**

**MATERIALS:** Ramer Concrete; **CONCRETE INTERIOR FLOORS:** North Texas Bomanite dba Texas Bomanite; **LIMESTONE:** Contractor’s Stone Supply; **SLATE:** National Stone; **FIRE-PLACES:** Isokern of Texas; **STRUCTURAL STEEL:** Metroplex Fabrication & Erection; **METAL WALL/FASCIA PANELS:** Hipwell Sheetmetal; **PREFABRICATED WOOD TRUSSES:** Associated Truss & Lumber; **ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK/WOOD DOORS:** SAW Custom Millwork; **MEMBRANE ROOFING:** Heritage One Roofing; **ENTRANCES/GLAZE CURTAINWALL/TUB AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES:** Texas Glass Contracting; **WINDOW TREATMENTS:** Mechoshade; **DESIGN SOFTWARE:** DC CADD





# Modesty is a Virtue

by Ben Koush, AIA

**Project** The Fisher Street House, Houston

**Clients** Rick Russell and Kathleen Smith

**Architect** Donna Kacmar, FAIA

**Design team** Donna Kacmar, FAIA; Alan Creech, AIA

**Photographers** Julie Pizzo Wood; Charlotte Wood; Luis Ayala





Architect and educator Donna Kacmar has demonstrated how to do rather a lot with not very much in this tiny, 544-sf house. What's more, unlike the grim experiments in bare-bones housing devised by modern architects in the heroic but stoic 1920s, Kacmar's simple design uses a similarly minuscule bit of space but feels instead like a light-hearted garden folly where one is permanently on vacation.

This "shed-for-living," as architectural historian Stephen Fox dubs it in the third edition of *The Houston Architectural Guide*, plays upon the rusticity of its location to great effect. It was built in Garden Oaks, which was Houston's first Federal Housing Administration-insured subdivision when it was inaugurated in 1937. Garden Oaks was planned according to federal standards with deliberately large lots, small houses, and winding streets lacking curbs and gutters. Although today there is an increasing number of tear-downs and entire blocks of original New-Deal-era houses are now gone, the block where this house is located still retains most of the original housing stock.

According to Kacmar, her client, Rick Russell, owned this nearly 20,000-sf lot for several years as it was both close to his business in nearby Oak Forest and to Garden Oaks Elementary where his grandchildren attend school. At the time he started working with Kacmar he was living in a downtown condominium but was frequently traveling to Austin to visit his future wife, Kathleen Smith. He was generally looking to simplify as retirement neared and initially considered living in an Airstream trailer already parked on the property. However, due to onerous city regulations regarding what exactly constitutes a "trailer park" in Houston, he found this route unfeasible.

The architect and client devised a scheme for a house that incorporated key elements of the Airstream trailer experience: low cost, small size, and potential portability. They determined a theoretical budget of \$100,000 by multiplying the years he had until retirement by the condominium association's monthly fees — the idea being that this sum represented money he





was already planning to spend but would never recover should he sell the unit in a few years. They arrived at the maximum size of the house by simply doubling the area of the 34' by 16' trailer. The 16' width was also the maximum size that could be transported on the roadways should the client decide to sell the property and move the house out to the country upon his retirement.

**Due to the diminutive floor plan** and desired flexibility, Kacmar set the house at the far rear of the property to leave space for a possible larger structure in front. The landscaping scheme devised by Tom Smith and Rita Hodge

*The architect and client devised a scheme for a house that incorporated key elements of the Airstream trailer experience: low cost, small size, and potential portability.*

effectively fixes the house on the site. An earthen terrace about one foot tall was built up directly in front of the house. Although the house does not actually sit on it, the terrace serves visually as a plinth for the building. A gravel drive from the street that widens into a parking court brings people up to the house. The planting scheme features a small grove of sycamore



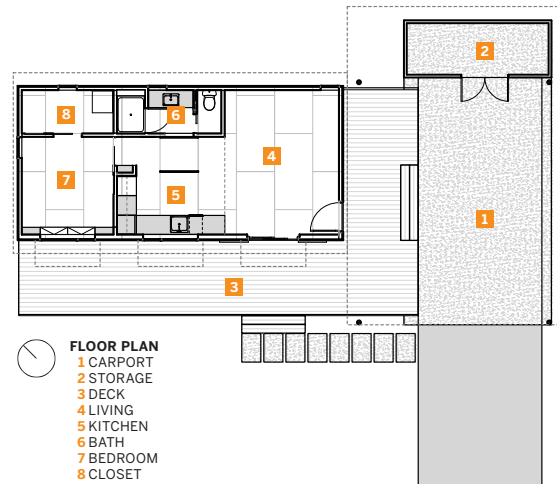




**Previous spread** Rick and Kathleen enjoy a drink in the small but efficient kitchen. The Airstream trailer is currently used as a guest house and playroom for visiting grandchildren.

**Opposite page** Sliding plywood panels protect the glass door when the owner is away and during storms.

**This page** The house is set to the rear of the lot to allow for future development or perhaps a large garden.

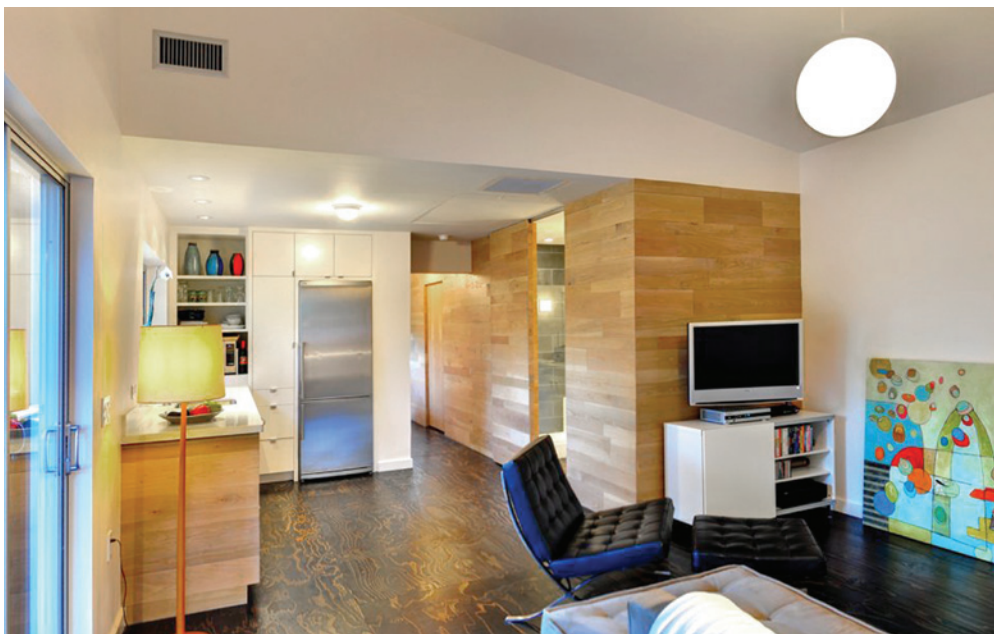




**This page, right** *The functional bedroom has ample storage.*

**Bottom** *The oak-clad cabinets and bathroom visually separate the kitchen and living area. Plywood floors are stained dark as a compliment to the lighter oak.*

**Opposite page** *The storage wall was deliberately left white so it visually recedes into the background. The screen to the right provides privacy.*







**Contractor** Kraig Jankowski

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL:** Jon Monteith; **LANDSCAPE PHASE I:** Tom Smith; **LANDSCAPE PHASE II:** RH Factor Landscape Design

**Resources** **CONCRETE PAVEMENT/EXTERIOR SUN CONTROL/ KITCHEN AND BATH CABINETS:** Stan-Co Home Improvements; **POROUS PAVING:** Dennis Williams & Co.; **WOOD FENCING/LUMBER/ WOOD TREATMENTS/GLUE LAMINATED TIMBER/SPECIALTY DOORS/ WOOD FLOORING:** Montalbano Lumber; **MAILBOX:** Oasis Mailbox; **METAL COLUMNS:** Triple-S Steel; **ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK/ WALL SURFACES:** Mason's Mill and Lumber; **INTERIOR DIVIDING WALLS:** 3Form; **COUNTERTOPS/DECORATIVE FINISHES:** New Living; **INSULATION:** Perfection Supply; **ROOF AND WALL PANELS/METAL ROOFING:** Berridge Manufacturing; **SLIDING GLASS DOOR/METAL WINDOWS:** RAM Windows; **WOOD DOORS:** The Detering Company; **GYPSON BOARD FRAMING:** Marek Brothers; **TILE:** DalTile; **PAINTS:** Sherwin Williams; **TUB/SHOWER ENCLOSURES:** Mirror Gallery; **FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT:** Ferguson Enterprises

trees along with ranks of several varieties of wispy ornamental grasses. These interventions subtly displace the flatness of the site and articulate several distinct outdoor spaces. They also provide a satisfying sense of depth and progression on what would otherwise be a fairly featureless lot.

**The wood-framed house** itself sits on stubby concrete pier caps about three feet above the ground. Flat metal straps connecting the wood floor plate to these caps are designed so that they can be cut and the house lifted onto a trailer should it need to be moved. Exterior walls are clad with a special corrugated metal siding installed without exposed fasteners. A large deck made of rot-resistant ipe planks surrounds the house on two sides. A carport, supported by thick galvanized steel pipe columns and glulam beams,

*Thinly cut pieces of reclaimed oak clad the walls of the bathroom and bedroom closet, as well as half of the kitchen cabinets.*

shades part of this deck. The house has a single shed roof and contains an open living and kitchen area that takes up about two-thirds of the interior space. The remaining smaller rooms comprise the bathroom, bedroom, and closet. The ceilings of the living area and bedroom follow the slope of the roof and reach eleven feet at their peak. A flat, eight-ft ceiling above the bathroom and kitchen in the center of the house allows for a partial attic that contains the air handler and the furnace. Thinly cut pieces of reclaimed oak clad the walls of the bathroom and bedroom closet, as well as half of the kitchen cabinets. The remaining interior walls are white-painted gypsum board. The floor is birch veneer plywood panels finished with an ebony stain.

Although such features as the large deck, landscaping, metal exterior siding, and oak interior paneling pushed the final cost above the initial budget, the original ethos of simplicity and restraint guiding the design remained firmly intact. Such conspicuous modesty is refreshing to see in Houston during a period of economic recovery when established architects are again designing mansions. This project also serves as a clear model for a different way forward in an era of what may be defined by dwindling resources. With this little house, Kacmar has shown us that with wit, cleverness, and careful planning, one can pare down to essentials without sacrificing the comfort and the pleasures of good living.

Ben Koush, AIA, is currently writing a book for the University of Texas Press about modern architecture in Houston.









# Simple Serendipity

by Eurico R. Francisco, AIA

**Project** Wildwood Pool House, Dallas

**Clients** Carol and Peter York

**Architect** Upchurch Architects

**Design team** Thomas Hayne Upchurch, AIA; Elizabeth Price, AIA; Dawson Skow

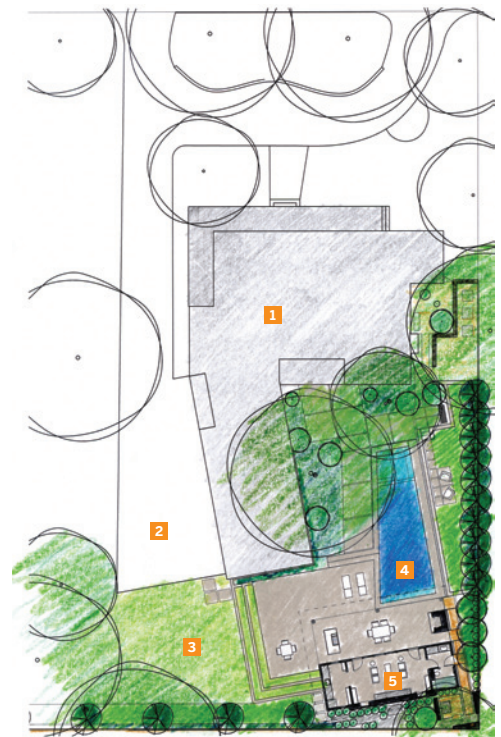
**Photographer** Hester + Hardaway Photographers

Carol and Peter York collect art. When their former house in the leafy Greenway Park neighborhood of Dallas no longer accommodated their growing collection, they began to look for a new home. They came upon a house in the nearby Bluffview neighborhood that they felt could be right for them. At first, it wasn't easy to see the possibilities, but Carol and Peter felt reassured as they began to simplify the finishes introduced by the former owners. As the heavy furniture was removed, opening the rooms; as the dark shades were taken down, letting light flood in; and as the carpets were peeled away, exposing the reclaimed oak hardwood floors; the house showed its true self.

It was all that the new owners wished for — generous, elegant, and filled with beautiful natural light. Carol and Peter were now convinced that their instincts were right. The wide galleries that run the full width of the house on both first and second floors seemed to have been designed with art in mind. The Bluffview house gave Carol and Peter what they had been missing — a house that was not only comfortable to live in, but that also had plenty of space with appropriate walls and light for collecting and displaying their burgeoning art collection.

**As they settled in**, the new owners became curious about the history of the house. Who had built it? And, more important, who had designed it? A few phone calls led them to Jim Nisbet, who had built the house in the 1980s. Jim, in turn, introduced Carol and Peter to Tommy Upchurch, AIA, his friend and the architect of the house. New friendships were formed. Carol and Peter were pleased to have met the architect of the house that they had grown to love, and Tommy was encouraged to see that the new owners cared as much about the house as he did.





**Contractor** Pedernales Development Company

**Consultants** **LANDSCAPE:** David Rolston Landscape Architects; **LIGHTING:** Archillum Lighting Design; **STRUCTURAL:** Walker Structural Engineering; **MEP:** Talex Engineers

**Resources** **CONCRETE PAVEMENT:** Ramer Concrete; **POOL/SPA/RETAINING WALLS:** Water + Structures; **LIMESTONE:** Materials Marketing; **ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK:** Wooten Metals; **LUMBER:** Davis Hawn Lumber, 84 Lumber; **WOOD CEILINGS:** Davis Hawn Lumber; **IPE OUTDOOR GARDEN WALLS/SCREENS:**

Brazos Forest Products; **WATERPROOFING:** 84 Lumber; **METAL ROOFING/FLASHINGS:** Creative Roof Systems; **WOOD DOORS/WINDOWS:** National Window & Door Source; **GLASS CLERESTORY UNDERPANELS:** Binswanger Glass; **TILE:** American Tile Supply; **PAINTS:** Sherwin Williams; **AV EQUIPMENT:** Paul LaBute; **HVAC:** Trane (Chapman Heat and Air); **SOFTWARE:** Vectorworks; **LIGHTING:** Meletio Electric; **PLUMBING FIXTURES:** Waterworks, Nob Hill Decorative Hardware; **OUTDOOR FURNISHINGS:** Allan Knight & Associates, Scott & Cooner; **INDOOR FURNISHINGS:** Design Within Reach; **APPLIANCES:** Capital Distributing



**SITE PLAN**  
 1 EXISTING MAIN HOUSE  
 2 DRIVE  
 3 LAWN  
 4 POOL  
 5 NEW POOL HOUSE





**Opening spread** *The pool and the pool house seen from the main house.*

**Opposite page** *Daylight, artwork, and the geometry of the space animate the interior of the pool house. The pool house porch blurs interior and exterior spaces.*

**Left** *The straightforward massing of the pool house is capped by a clerestory that brings light to its interior as well as to the porch.*

The new friendship grew into partnership when Carol and Peter began to think about building something in the backyard — a place where their grandkids could change clothes when they came to visit and play in the pool. It was clear to the team that this could be the opportunity to fully engage the back half of the lot in a manner that had not been part of the original design scope in the 1980s. True, a pool had subsequently been built in the backyard, but it never really felt right. And so the idea evolved into completing the house by designing and building a new pool and pool house — a place that would serve its basic purpose (where grandkids could

*The interior of the pool house is an open plan simply finished. The muted color palette with warm greys, whites, and beiges serves as a calming backdrop to the life that unfolds in the building.*

play, relax, and change clothes), but that would also complement the house as its more informal and relaxed sibling.

The result is remarkable. Walking through the gardens today, it is difficult to imagine the space any other way. Everything feels just right — the pool and the new house, with the landscaped edges defining the previously non-existent courtyard and gardens. The pool extends from the rear of the main house and widens as it reaches the patio of the pool house. The landscape design skillfully supports and reinforces the spatial composition. Large square stone pavers mark a path from the main house along the southern perimeter of the pool and, to the north, the pool is bound by a raised bed and trees.

The pool house porch, which takes up half of the building footprint, perfectly blurs the indoors and outdoors. Generous enough for a chef's grille, a fireplace, tables, and lounge chairs, it sits at the shallow end of the pool and gives it a focal point. The rigor of the main facade with the

placement of the three French doors — perfectly centered in the composition — betrays the relaxed atmosphere elsewhere, inside and out. Other smaller window openings throughout the building are strategically placed to bring focus to an interior element or to direct the eye elsewhere outside. A series of four glazed lights projects from the roof, emphasizing the central composition of the facade while also providing natural light for the interior and patio spaces. The standing-seam hipped roof and simple massing speak to Texas vernacular and permanence.

The interior of the pool house is an open plan simply finished. The muted color palette with warm greys, whites, and beiges serves as a calming backdrop to the life that unfolds in the building. Texas Lueders stone used throughout the interior and exterior spaces deepens the connection between the two and further reaffirms the pool house as a building of its place.

New interventions that feel as if they have always been there are one of the hallmarks of good design. Although the initial scope of work for the pool house did not anticipate such dramatic change to the Yorks' home, Carol's sensibility for art and space encouraged the team to explore more ambitious territory. "It was truly a collaborative effort," Carol says, "among architect, owner, builder, and landscape architect. We had a strong team, made of strong personalities, and we are still friends!" The team created a place that is warm, welcoming, and inviting.

Serendipity led Carol and Peter York to discover the right house for their art collection, which in turn led them to meet Jim, the builder, and Tommy, the architect — the perfect team, according to Carol. The shared effort resulted in a pool house that gives continuity to a cycle that started two decades ago with the construction of the original house. Who knows where serendipity will lead this team next?

Eurico R. Francisco, AIA, is an architect in Dallas, TX.





# A Triangle and A Tree

by Catherine Gavin

**Project** 64 Vanguard Way, Dallas

**Clients** Deborah Orrill and Blair Sanders

**Architect** Max Levy Architect

**Design team** Max Levy, FAIA; Jason David Smith; Clint Brister

**Photographer** Charles Davis Smith, AIA





**6**<sup>4</sup> Vanguard Way in Dallas is a simple composition that represents a thoughtful and rigorous response to the challenges of the site. The house combines subtle connections to nature with playful gestures in the art of dwelling that both suit and delight the couple that lives there.

Deborah Orrill and her husband Blair Sanders wanted a serene new home to accommodate their lifestyle as well as the extensive tools of her work as a chef and his large collection of LPs. They purchased a triangular lot in the Urban Reserve development for its view of White Rock Creek, its openness, and for the perfect Chinquapin oak tree in the middle of the property. The neighborhood had a growing collection of modern homes, all by notable local and national architects, that incorporated the low-impact and sustainable ethos of the community.

Primary to the purchase of the site was an agreement with the developer to build a home that would adhere to the neighborhood's sustainability codes. The couple approached Max Levy, FAIA. "We had very few

demands," recalls Deborah. "The budget was the most important and I wanted him to see that we were regular people." She immediately felt at ease with Max, however, when she arrived at his office and found him and her husband chatting like old friends. "He was genuine and sincere — and in the end we were just charmed by the designs he showed us."

L-shaped in plan, the house is composed of three distinct volumes that gently embrace the oak in the angle of the composition. A unique cylindrical building forms a generous primary entry and connects to a long, rectangular main building that meets the two-story bedroom wing at a slightly obtuse angle. Narrow glazed corridors act as hyphens connecting the main building to the other two structures. The 2500-sf two-bedroom home is a quietly composed testament to well-balanced geometry and Max Levy's understanding of the Texas climate.

Organizing the plan on the site was the primary challenge. "Just fitting the building onto this acute triangle and not killing the tree took the



majority of our attention,” Max explains. The emphasis on the plan and the measured proportions of the buildings, however, are the foundation of subtle elements that enhance the building’s interactions with the rain, sun, and tree.

The orientation, massing, and materials all reinforce the relationship of the buildings to the site and to one another. The taller roof of the bedroom wing, for example, captures water that flows to the lower roof where it is channeled to the large rain cistern located on the rear patio. “The design purposefully acknowledges rain and allows for the enjoyment of how the water is channeled to the cistern,” says Max.

The primary cladding materials — buff-colored stucco and galvanized sheet metal panels — are readily available and appropriately respond to both the modest budget as well as the intense sun and heat. Broad eaves protect the stucco panels, while the more durable sheet metal finishes the secondary, gabled facades that are entirely exposed to the elements

The juxtaposition of rough stucco with the regular lines of the metal seams creates a crisp rhythm on all of the facades. The fenestration of the stucco facades interrupts and continues these lines. Exposed LVL studs act as mullions between glass panes and carry the lines of the standing-seam roofs onto the facades. These windows maximize interior views of

*Birdhouses suspended from the eaves, and the shadows cast by the address numbers contribute to the whimsical character of the house while also connecting the buildings to this unique site and the natural environment.*

the full height of the tree from the main building, while the canopy of the tree is experienced from the windows and balcony of the bedroom wing. Casement and awning hopper windows are skillfully employed as a direct response to their location on the facades and their exposure to rain.

**Playful elements such as** the martini deck atop the cylindrical entry, the expansive private rear patio, the birdhouses suspended from the eaves, and the shadows cast by the address numbers all contribute to the whimsical character of the house while also connecting the buildings to this unique site and the natural environment.

This connection is readily apparent in the interior. The bifurcated plan segregates the public living and entertaining areas from the private bedrooms and storage spaces. The cylindrical entry creates a pause and transition from the street into the home. The formal living room, kitchen and study area occupy the main building. It is largely open in plan — partial walls hide mechanicals or kitchen appliances such as the refrigerator and stove, but never completely enclose the spaces, allowing for longer views and unfiltered light.

To the west, the floor-to-ceiling windows marked by the exposed studs (beautifully whitewashed and sanded) literally dematerialize the traditional walls. To the east, four double-leaf doors connect to the patio. Deborah notes the changing sunlight as one of the main surprises of the home. “Here we are on the right angle or axis; we really see the changes in the light.” She also says they can chase the moon through the windows, seeing it rise in the evening and set in the morning.



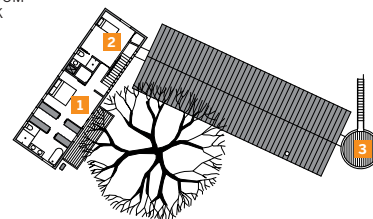
**Previous spread** View looking east from Vanguard Way to the house, the windows of both buildings enjoy the views of the Chinquapin oak tree in the center of the lot.

**This page** The birdhouses, popular spots for the local starlings, reflect the volumes of the individual buildings of the home.



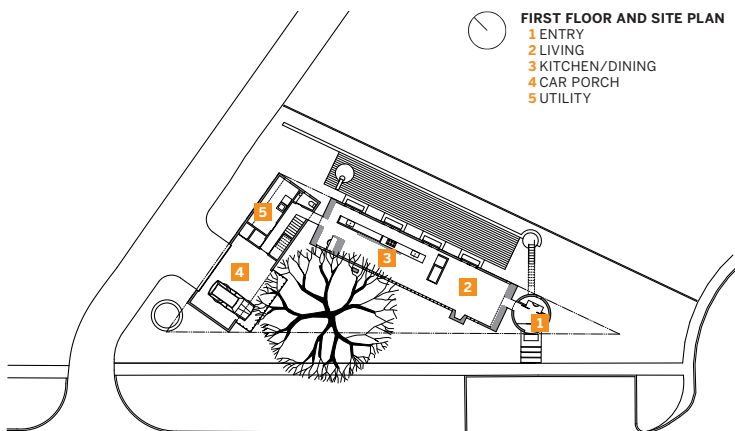
#### SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- 1 MASTER BEDROOM
- 2 GUEST BEDROOM
- 3 MARTINI DECK



#### FIRST FLOOR AND SITE PLAN

- 1 ENTRY
- 2 LIVING
- 3 KITCHEN/DINING
- 4 CAR PORCH
- 5 UTILITY







*The martini deck is perched above the entry and is accessed via the steel stairs located opposite the cistern on the rear patio. In the interior, light from the glazed corridor, between the living room and entry, guides the view along the length of the home. Casement windows and awning hoppers add diversity to the lines of the facades of the bedroom wing.*





**Contractor** CCM Group

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL:** GroupStructural Engineers; **INTERIORS:** Sharon Odum, AIA

**Resources** **BIRDHOUSES/DINING TABLE/OUTDOOR STAIRS/GARAGE CABINETS:** Jason David Smith; **LIMESTONE:** Mezger Enterprises; **ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK:** Element Furnishings; **DECKING:** Diamond Decking; **PRE-FABRICATED STRUCTURAL WOOD:** iLevel; **PREFABRICATED TRUSSES:** Texoma Truss and Lumber; **SPECIALTY DOORS:** BMC West; **WOOD WINDOWS:** Pella; **GLASS:** Thermal Windows; **KITCHEN/BATH CABINETS:** IKEA; **SOFTWARE:** DC CADD







**Opposite page** *The exposed studs of the living area and bedroom wing were whitewashed and sanded to emphasize texture and soften the color of the wood. The glazed corridor is fully protected by the broad eave of the two-story building. Water flows from this roof to the lower roof where it is directed into the cistern.*

**This page** *In an effort to minimize the budget, IKEA cabinets with custom pulls were installed throughout the kitchen. Custom built-in furniture defines the dining area and sitting areas across from the kitchen.*



The kitchen occupies the center of the plan and was a particular focus of Deborah's. "I challenged Max to use IKEA cabinets," she says. She presented him with an ideal layout based on the modular designs of the cabi-

*"I am convinced that composure is something that gives us a sense of a stopping place in our harried lives. If you see something well composed and quiet, it is a source of relief."*

nets, which Max took into consideration and modified for the final plan. "I like the fact that it looks like an un-kitchen," she notes. "I also love the pure simplicity of the pot rack." With the exception of the custom cabinets for Deborah's desk and Blair's electronic equipment, stereo, and LP collection, IKEA cabinets were used throughout the house.

The bedroom wing is composed of a garage, storage, and utilitarian spaces on the ground floor. Guest accommodations are situated at the top of the stairs with a private bath, and the large master suite occupies the remaining eastern portion of this floor.

**A muted color palette** of cool greens, greys, and blues is woven into rich fabrics throughout the spaces. The ceiling of the main living area is a light grey that continues the color of the sheet metal soffit from the exterior. Deborah smiles when she recalls asking Max if grey would feel like a dark cloud in the house and he responded that a dark cloud can be a good thing in Texas. In the bedroom wing, the ceiling is blue — "like walking up into the sky," says Max.

He planned for flexibility that allows the couple to grow into the house and make small changes as they see fit. "We were reluctant about the master bedroom going upstairs because want to get old here, but Max designed it so we can put a residential elevator in that hall where we currently have storage, which was a good solution for us." The plans also specify ceiling tracks for translucent privacy screens in the entry to shield the desk area as well as to separate the kitchen from the dining area and the guest accommodations from the stairs below.

Max explains that to make a house visually and conceptually crisp, the architect must pay attention to proportions, careful alignments, and geometry — must compose it. "I am convinced that composure is something that gives us a sense of a stopping place in our harried lives. If you see something well composed and quiet, it is a source of relief."

This home that sits on a triangle and looks out onto a tree embraces its environment with measured though simple architecture — a composition that is at once artful, yet practical in the extreme.

Catherine Gavin is editor of *Texas Architect*.







# Place Matters

by Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA

**Project** Gurley Place at Jubilee Park, Dallas

**Client** City of Dallas

**Architect** buildingcommunityWORKSHOP

**Design team** Brent Brown, AIA; James Oppelt, Assoc. AIA;  
Benje Feehan, Assoc. AIA

**Photographers** Nicole Mlaker; Neil Hacker

Much has changed throughout the city of Dallas over its history. It has risen from its prominence in the bustling cotton and oil industries into a multi-faceted economic center and one of the largest inland ports in the world. And consequently, it has also seen the very texture of its landscape transformed as a result of its high economic achievements throughout the post-war period. The old Dallas of one hundred years ago, however, remains tucked among the shadows of Fair Park.

The Jubilee Park neighborhood occupies 62 blocks of southeast Dallas along the eastern arm of Interstate 30. With the nearby industrial enterprises providing employment, the Jubilee Park area grew during the 1920s as home to working-class families living in modest wood-framed houses. Since 1950, however, the neighborhood has experienced nearly a 50 percent drop in population and a concurrent decline in the quality of housing offered to its residents. Because the homes were originally constructed as inexpensive temporary shelters, the buildings have deteriorated over time, suffering most notably from the repeated flooding due to an underperforming storm water system. Many of the houses have been rendered unusable. To complicate matters, median household income in the community ranks 40 percent lower than in the rest of the city of Dallas, and home values are 80 percent lower.

Jubilee Park nonetheless remains home to generations of families who hope to see investment in improvement of the community. The shotgun homes of the 1920s reflect the industrial growth in the region at that time and have become a valuable vernacular in themselves. The small lots of





these historic homes are often safe havens in the neighborhood and are the spaces where the community gathers on any given afternoon.

Since the establishment of the Jubilee Park Community Center in 1997 and the implementation of a strategic growth plan in 2004, efforts have been made to help the community transition into a new outlook. An impor-

*The community sought a solution through architecture: new, sustainable, low-cost buildings to encourage elderly residents to stay in Jubilee Park.*

tant influence in creating that new attitude is buildingcommunityWORKSHOP (bcWORKSHOP), a Dallas-based nonprofit and community design center. With their involvement, the aim for future development of Jubilee Park is in stark contrast to many of its peers.

The traditional approach to redevelopment, especially within the past decade, has been mired in the detailed scrutiny of municipal funds and efforts. Through overuse of the blanket term “blight” and emphasis on city-implemented Tax Incremented Financing (TIF) Districts, new developments often create a degree of anxiety and distrust within the established community. The proposals, despite good intentions, tend to sacrifice local relevance in favor of an emphasis on a specific urban planning vision. This tack often results from an absence of community involvement and tends to alienate the neighborhood further.

**With Gurley Place**, an affordable senior housing development located across the street from Jubilee Park, the efforts from bcWORKSHOP took the opposite approach. Through their earlier work on Congo Street, bcWORKSHOP immediately saw the need for community engagement as a way of earning trust moving forward. They also knew that this interaction would be a key element to maintaining one of the most intact, early twentieth-century neighborhoods in the city of Dallas.

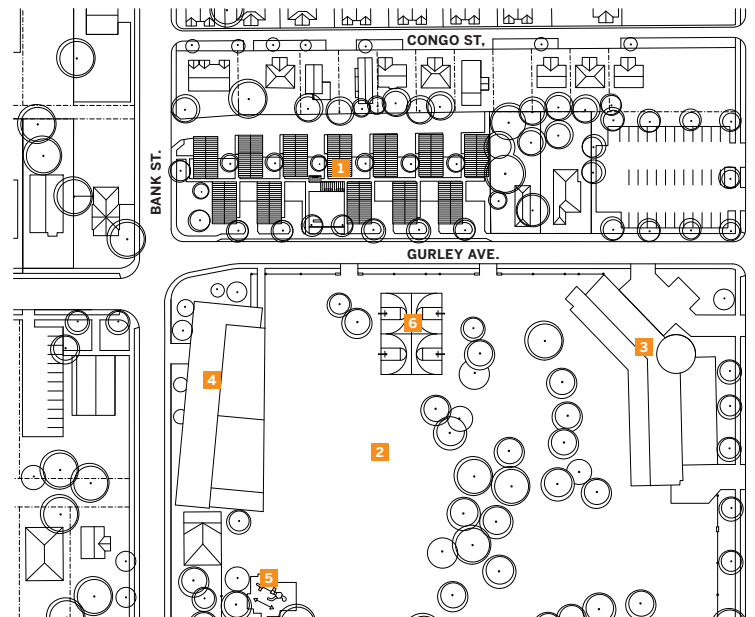


**Previous spread** *The buildings of Gurley Place reflect the style of the 1920s shotgun homes in Jubilee Park.*

**This page** *Through a series of six key design sessions, the design developed in a hands-on manner with consistent input from the community.*

**Opposite page** *Gurley Place is located directly across the street from Jubilee Park, placing the seniors in the heart of the community.*





**SITE PLAN**

- 1 GURLEY PLACE
- 2 JUBILEE PARK
- 3 DAVID'S PLACE
- 4 JUBILEE COMMUNITY CENTER
- 5 PLAYGROUND
- 6 BASKETBALL COURTS



As the team began working in the community, with direct support from the Jubilee Park Neighborhood Association, the need for affordable senior housing was apparent. The deteriorated quality of the housing stock, the poor management practices, and the inefficiency of the homes all supported new housing for the aging residents.

The community sought a solution through architecture: new sustainable, low-cost buildings to encourage elderly residents to stay in Jubilee Park. In contrast to the traditional housing scheme of a perimeter block with all public activity taking place internally, the community requested

*The architecture of Gurley Place in its totality is ordinary. It is a design that gives every resident comfort in knowing that though it is something new, the space can be just as familiar as the home and neighborhood they grew up in.*

a design that would fit within the existing context and respond to the park across the street from the proposed development. They also desired an increased street presence to provide an extra sense of security and to enable them to watch over their neighborhood.

bcWORKSHOP set up six design meetings with the residents prior to completing the design. These meetings influenced the project from the phasing of the development to the design of the interior layouts and material palettes. The meetings also ensured that measures were taken to create a plan to use post-occupancy surveys and leasing percentages to analyze the growth and improvements. When construction commenced in 2010 and throughout the project, the community remained involved and attended on-site meetings. A large open house with the residents, architects, and the various stakeholders celebrated the completion of the project. The collaboration was fundamental to the overall success of Gurley Place.

Located adjacent to the park and the community center, Gurley Place provides immediate, easy access for the elderly residents to critical services within the community. With its success, the project lends itself to forming a nucleus for greater redevelopment in Jubilee Park, while also placing the senior members at the heart of the community.

**Gurley Place fits** perfectly into the setting of Jubilee Park — as if it had been there for some time. Immediately the attention to scale and orientation becomes evident. Maximizing the block form of the site, a series of 12 two-story, stacked duplexes stagger in parallel rows along the street. The composition defines a strong urban edge and utilizes the green spaces within the voids to create a series of connections where the block interacts with the street and park. The form lends itself well to the residents, and each unit takes advantage of the views.

The scale, from the overall massing of the homes to the patterns of the facades and slatted screens, negotiates the placement of the buildings well within their surrounding one-story neighbors. Capped with long linear pitched roofs, the project is clearly evocative of the shotgun-style homes characteristic of the region for almost a century. The defining element of each building is the external staircase, which gives the architectural composition a sense of rhythm throughout the site.

The play between the materials of the duplexes and the gardens creates a warm palette as the backdrop to the spaces within the project and the

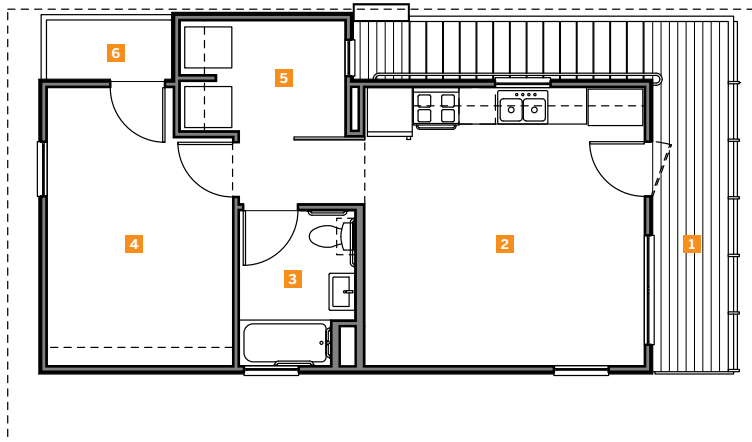


*The material palette is simple. It utilizes thin wood slats to create horizontal screens, which give the houses a sense of scale that relates with the street. The staggered orientation of the buildings on the site results in a strong stitching of the green space, the buildings, and the street. The overall massing gives the development a familiar street presence evocative of the history of the neighborhood.*

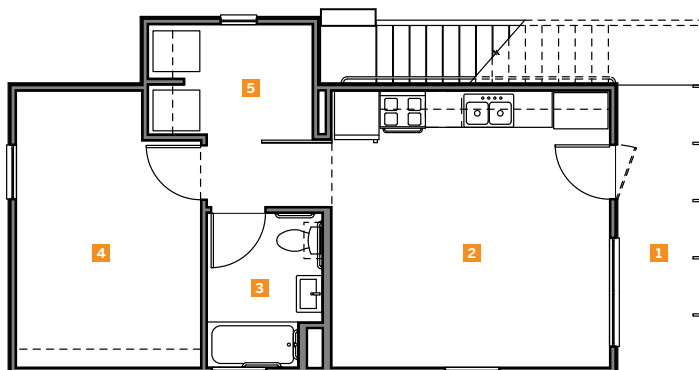




*The units are 536-sf and include a flexible space for use as a guestroom or storage. Many of the residents have filled this area with plants. Likewise on the balconies, people have created container gardens and sitting areas.*



**FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR PLANS**  
 1 PORCH  
 2 LIVING  
 3 BATH  
 4 BEDROOM  
 5 FLEXIBLE SPACE  
 6 BALCONY



**Contractor** Symone Construction Services

**Consultants** CIVIL: Kadleck & Associates; **STRUCTURAL:** TMBP|Click; **MEP:** MEP Systems

**Resources** **CONCRETE MATERIALS:** Latino's Ready Mix; **FENCES/GATES:** Home Depot; **BENCHES:** Landscape Forms; **RAILINGS:** McMaster-Carr; **LUMBER/WATERPROOFING/SIDING:** Frisco Wholesale Lumber; **INSULATION:** Demilec; **METAL ROOFING:** MetalMart; **GYPSUM:** American Gypsum; **TILE:** DalTile; **PAINTS:** Sherwin Williams; **GRILLES/SCREENS:** General Aluminum; **LETTERS/PLAQUES:** The Hillman Group; **SIGNAGE:** Eagle Signs and Design; **TUB/SHOWER ENCLOSURES:** Moore Supply; **KITCHEN/BATH CABINETS:** Kitchen Cabinets; **WINDOW TREATMENTS:** Bali Blinds



**This spread, top** Berma Dye sits in her living room with the unit's flexible space to the right.

**Bottom left** Diane Barron and her small dog sit next to a bookcase in her living room.

**Bottom right** The flexible space in the plan is often used for utilities and storage. Vinetta Andrews is pictured below in her living room.

**Opposite page** Berma, Diane, and Vinetta enjoy the private outdoor spaces requested during the design sessions with architects.





park beyond. With LEED Gold certification as a baseline goal, the majority of materials comply with high sustainability standards and a rather tight budget.

The warmth of the exterior carries over to the interior. The 536-sf plans take full advantage of the onsite landscaping while also allowing for private zones and an ample sense of seclusion. The living areas are methodically placed in proximity to the balconies and the private bedrooms are situated towards the rear of the units. Additional flexible space, large enough for a twin bed, allows for uses such as storage, a room for a guest or caregiver, or a place to park wheelchairs or electric scooters. bcWORKSHOP notes that a few of the residents have used this room for interior green space. To lower energy and living costs, strong sustainable practices are incorporated into the heating and cooling systems, water supply, and landscape planning.

The architecture of Gurley Place in its totality is ordinary. There is nothing earth-shattering about the buildings, but it was never intended to be that. bcWORKSHOP's involvement with Jubilee Park community members has resulted in an architecture that holds true to its sense of place. The connection to the surrounding neighborhood, both visually and socially, makes the project highly intriguing. It is a design that gives every resident comfort in knowing that, though it is something new, the space can be just as familiar as the home and neighborhood they grew up in.

The way the buildings and the apartments interact with each other and the street is the way the Jubilee Park has been for over 100 years. The project is like opening a book of architectural patterns and interpreting each element verbatim, all in keeping with the desires of the community. From the need for increased connection to neighbors to the request for private outdoor space, the hopes of the residents were met in a manner that celebrates the historical framework of the community.

**bcWORKSHOP's effort** with Gurley Place is a testament to the importance of architecture in the civic process. Through a simple willingness to listen and respond to the community, as well as manage seamless coordination between the city and the consulting firms, bcWORKSHOP created an architectural solution that is a successful marriage of style, function, and heritage.

The efforts made toward connecting with an isolated community have resulted in a sense of trust. bcWORKSHOP has become a group that the community of Jubilee Park can turn to for support and advice concerning architecture and process. Although neighborhoods have often felt a sense of anxiousness concerning development, Jubilee Park today has a sense of ease and confidence in knowing that the future of the neighborhood involves and includes them.

These efforts demonstrate what can happen when architecture plays a role in creating a sense of place. Whether maintaining or strengthening a community and helping it evolve for the future, it is the civic duty that reminds us all why we became architects in the first place

Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA, is a Project Designer with Laguarda Low in Dallas.





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## Uchiko

**Project** Uchiko, Austin

**Client** Tyson Cole and Daryl Kunik

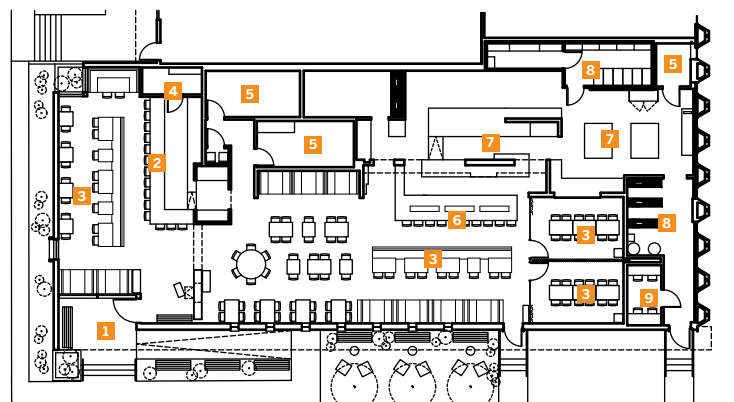
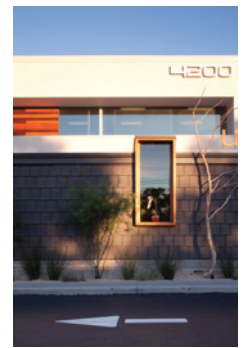
**Architect** Michael Hsu Office of Architecture

**Design team** Michael Hsu, AIA; Jay Colombo, AIA

**Photographer** Paul Bardagjy

Completed in June 2010 by Michael Hsu Office of Architecture, Uchiko is a 4,954-sf sister restaurant to one of Austin's popular restaurants, Uchi, which is operated by Chef Tyson Cole. The scope of the project included both interior and exterior renovations to an existing building in north Austin that was primarily used as medical office spaces. The architects designed the entire building shell renovation and the tenant improvements for Uchiko, along with the current office spaces on the second floor.

"When we were designing the shell renovation, we were intentionally designing the exterior to reflect Uchiko as a distinct tenant instead of keeping it consistent with the other tenants. It provided a nice balance to building massing while at the same time giving Uchiko its own identity," says architect Jay Colombo. The design evokes the atmosphere of a simple Japanese farmhouse with an emphasis on natural materials and evidence of craftsmanship. The palette of materials includes solid bronze, hand-stained brick, rough-sawn walnut and wood siding burned using the traditional Japanese technique of shou-sugi-ban. A wall of vintage cabinets separates the bar from the dining space, and steel-framed windows enclose a private dining room at the rear. Lighting throughout the restaurant is primarily achieved with custom walnut light boxes and a branch-like fixture of glass globes that organically spreads across the ceiling. Embossed brass washers adorn acoustic areas of the ceiling, subtly forming stitch lines across the space. ■



- FLOOR PLAN**
- 1 ENTRY
  - 2 BAR
  - 3 DINING
  - 4 WINE STORAGE
  - 5 RESTROOM
  - 6 SUSHI BAR
  - 7 KITCHEN
  - 8 STORAGE
  - 9 OFFICE

**Contractor** Blue & Associates

**Consultants** **CONTRIBUTING DECORATOR:** One.Eleven.Design; **LANDSCAPE:** D-Crain; **MEP:** AYS Engineering; **STRUCTURAL:** Structures; **LIGHTING:** KL Lighting Consultants; **KITCHEN:** Concept Services

**Resources** **METAL AWNINGS/INTERIOR METAL WORK:** 220 Designs; **CONCRETE ROOF/WALL TILES:** Hanson Roof Tile; **CONCRETE RESTROOM COUNTERTOPS:** Newbold Stone; **DINING ROOM BRICK:** Kansas Brick & Tile (AMP Brick & Stone); **RAILINGS/WOOD TREATMENTS/CABINETRY/WALL TREATMENTS/BRONZE SLIDING**

**DOOR/PDR WALL AND DOOR/WOOD CEILING/BOOTH/CEILING MOUNTED LIGHT BOXES/BRONZE BAR TOP:** Vintage Material Supply; **LUMBER:** US Lumber Brokers; **LAMINATES:** Wilsonart; **GLASS REINFORCED PLASTICS:** Marlite; **WATERPROOFING:** Brinkmann Roofing Company; **METAL DOORS:** Hull Supply; **SPECIALTY DOORS:** Overhead Door Company; **TILE:** L'Antic Colonial, Ege Keramik; **ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS:** Tectum; **WOOD FLOORING:** Catalina Home; **SPECIAL WALL SURFACES:** Rimex Metals; **PAINTS:** Sherwin Williams; **SIGNAGE/YAKATORI GRILL:** Ion Art; **FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT:** Concept Services; **WALK-IN COOLER:** Bally; **DESIGN SOFTWARE:** AutoCad, Google Sketch-Up; **ARTWORK:** Sodalitas



# Portfolio: Restaurants

## Trinity Restaurant

**Project** Trinity Restaurant, Houston

**Client** Culinary Associates

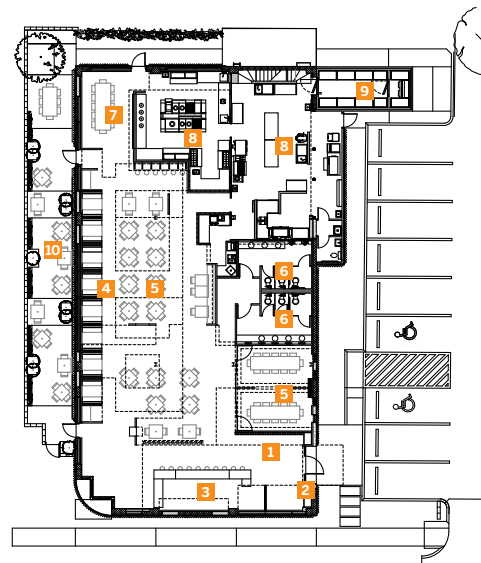
**Architect** MC2 Architects

**Design team** Chung Nguyen, AIA; Chuong Nguyen

**Photographer** Stephen Gutierrez

MC2 Architects renovated a 1936 Houston art-deco building for its client, the owners of Trinity Restaurant. The program includes indoor and outdoor dining, an open-concept kitchen, a bar, an herb garden, and support facilities. The 5,500-sf structure has housed various businesses and undergone numerous conversions throughout its history.

The architects restored the building to its original structure, adding a new metal skin that wraps around the building. The skin is made of folded and perforated aluminum panels with an opacity of 42 percent to block out the sun, while allowing the views to permeate. Taking advantage of the moving traffic in front of the building, one side of the panels is painted in a series of greens; the other side of the panels is painted in a series of oranges. The building changes from green to orange or vice versa depending on the direction of a viewer's travel. The concept for the interiors was to strike a balance between the original structure and the new renovations. Interior walls and ceilings were added in a series of three volumes that both hide and highlight different parts of the original building. Three steel columns and three brick columns, representing "Trinity," were left untouched to reveal the diverse history of the space. ■



### FLOOR PLAN

- 1 WINE DISPLAY
- 2 WINE CELLAR
- 3 BAR
- 4 BOOTH DINING
- 5 DINING
- 6 RESTROOM
- 7 CHEF'S TABLE
- 8 KITCHEN
- 9 WALK-IN COOLER
- 10 PATIO DINING



**Contractor** MC2 Architects and Construction

**Consultants** **LANDSCAPE:** The Office of James Burnett; **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Sigma Engineering; **CIVIL ENGINEERS:** Carlos A. Gutierrez, CSF Consulting, TBPE Firm F-4395, Civil Structural and Forensic Engineering Solutions; **MEP:** Boxx Group

**Resources** **CONCRETE MATERIALS/BAR/TABLES/BENCHES:** SiteCon Services; **PLANTING ACCESSORIES:** Element Garden; **GRANITE/TILE:** Thorntree Slate and Marble; **ARCHITECTURAL METALWORK/WALL COVERINGS:** McNichols; **METAL DOORS/SPECIALTY DOORS/ENTRANCES/METAL WINDOWS/GLASS/GLAZED CURTAINWALL:** Alex Glass and Mirrors; **GLASS PRODUCTS/ENTRANCE DOORS/GLASS BAR TOPS/SLIDING DIVIDER DOORS:** Vision Products; **PAINTS:** Benjamin Moore; **CUSTOM BUILT FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT:** ISI Food Service Equipment; **DRAPERY/CURTAIN HARDWARE:** Duralee; **RESTAURANT AND BAR FURNITURE/LIGHTING:** Tom Dixon, Zeitraum (Kuhl-Linscomb)



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# Portfolio: Restaurants

## hopdoddy

**Project** hopdoddy burger bar, Austin

**Clients** Chuck Smith, Larry Perdido, Larry Foles, Guy Villavaso

**Designers** Levy Architects; Aubrey Carter Design Office

**Design team** Aubrey Carter; Elizabeth Salaiz; Karyn Jensen (interior); Stephen V. Levy, AIA (exterior)

**Photographers** Casey Dunn, Matt Lankes

The hopdoddy restaurant is an anchor tenant in the recently rehabilitated West Anderson Plaza in north Austin. Four existing buildings, over 116,000-sf of retail space, were transformed by Levy Architects. Their master plan called for the introduction of new pedestrian circulation, the installation of public art, and new cladding materials to add texture, color, and depth to the existing structures. The buildings were refaced with stone, metal panels, new glazing, and canopies. Concrete planters were installed to facilitate circulation and provide ample space for landscaping.

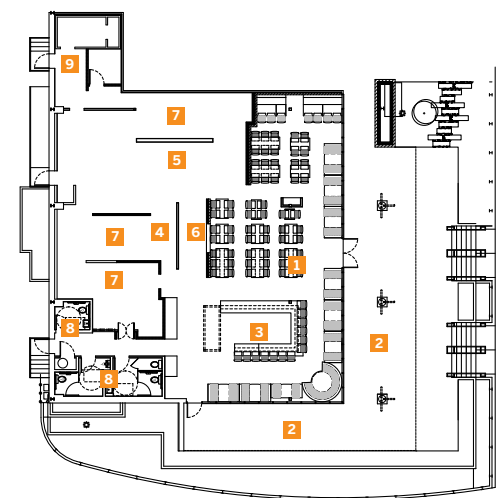
Chuck Smith of hopdoddy then turned to Aubrey Carter for consult on the interior design of the 4,000-sf restaurant. Carter notes that the clients had very specific ideas regarding the goal for the interior ambience. They hoped to establish a warm, relaxed atmosphere inspired by the slowly disappearing industrial buildings that comprise the older commercial areas of Austin. The team chose Austin brick, smooth-planed cedar, black iron, steel, and polished concrete as the primary interior finishes.

Circulation is crucial to the plan, as the restaurant requires a considerable amount of queuing space. A long, narrow passage for the queue bifurcates the room with dining on one side and the bar area on the other. Austin brick is used in the dining space in an effort to create a warm feeling aided by the light flooding in from the windows. The bar area is defined by the narrow lines of the smooth-planed cedar ceiling. This material is carried into the interior from the exterior soffit to create a seamless transition between the patio seating and the bar. ■

**Contractor** J. Grace

**Consultants** KITCHEN SPACE PLANNING: Commercial Design and Contracting

**Resources** CONCRETE RESTORATION: Advanced Concrete Protection; SLATE/MASONRY VENEER ASSEMBLIES: Montecillo Masonry; ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK/TABLES: Calderon Iron Works; LUMBER: Austin Wholesale Decking, Fine Lumber and Plywood; METAL DOORS: Hull Supply & Hull Services; SIGNAGE: Custom Sign Creations; CUSTOM FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT: Commercial Design and Contracting; BAR STOOLS/CHAIRS: Emeco; BOOTH: Texas Custom Seating II



- FLOOR PLAN**
- 1 DINING
  - 2 OUTSIDE DINING
  - 3 BAR
  - 4 QUEUE
  - 5 ORDERING
  - 6 CONDIMENTS
  - 7 KITCHEN
  - 8 RESTROOM
  - 9 STORAGE



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*—Christian Herr, AIA,  
Associate Principal,  
PBK Architects, Dallas*



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photography: Michael Lyon





## ... with Clovis Heimsath, FAIA

**Article by** Lawrence Connolly, AIA

**Photography by** Julie Pizzo Wood

Keeping up with Clovis Heimsath, FAIA, has never been easy — given the high levels of energy he focuses on many different areas of interest. These days — along with Maryann, his wife, business partner, and near-constant companion — he can be found one day a week in Austin working at Heimsath Architects, the current-day manifestation of the firm he founded in Houston in 1959. Otherwise, he's likely to be in or near the small town of Fayetteville. Find him on the farm they call home near the outskirts of town (check the vegetable garden). Or find him looking in on the Country Place Hotel that he and Maryann own and operate on the square. Or perhaps he'll be oil-painting in his studio and gallery behind the hotel.

Currently in his early eighties, Clovis established his now-second-generation practice with Maryann, an interior designer and liturgical consultant, in the carriage house behind their Houston residence where they lived with their five children. In the late '60s the family began going to Fayetteville for weekend getaways. They could be seen driving around the countryside with all the children in a station wagon looking for old buildings for Maryann to photograph. (These images would become illustrations for

Clovis' 1968 book, *Pioneer Texas Buildings*, which was expanded upon in 2002 as *Geometry in Architecture*.)

It finally became clear that rural Texas was calling, so in 1974 the Heimsaths became full-time residents on the farm outside of Fayetteville. And they moved the architecture firm to the mercantile building that is now their Country Place Hotel on the square. As a family, they discovered the joy of Fayetteville's rural and small-town lifestyle, the setting in which Clovis conceived his second book, *Behavioral Architecture*, published in 1977. The subject of how people use space remains for Clovis a subject of intense fascination.

**He applied this** building psychology to Fayetteville, a town that he says is “behaviorally, a dream.” The Heimsaths were instrumental in making the town a National Historic District and enacting ordinances to preserve the square downtown — measures that set a foundation for Fayetteville to grow while still keeping it an art center. These initiatives are responsible for the historic community's current image as a magnet for the arts and a good example to Clovis of how “you can develop behavior by assuming behavior.”





*Clovis and Maryann at their farm home and compound, which includes separate studio spaces and several small guest houses.*



**Right** Clovis the architect and the artist.



*Though technology has become a barrier for many older architects, it has actually resulted in fuller participation for Clovis.*

In their five decades of operation, the firm has relocated twice to towns located progressively west of Houston. The 100-mile move to Fayetteville took place when their son Ben — now an owner and manager in the firm — was

in middle school. They moved again twenty years later another 80 miles to Austin where they now practice out of an adaptive re-use of a former rental car office south of the old Mueller Airport that was honored with an Austin AIA design award in 2003.

Heimsath Architects has achieved national acclaim for their churches and they balance that specialty with a diverse portfolio of community buildings and houses. Since they first opened the doors, Clovis and Maryann have enthusiastically embraced the many changes and challenges to the architectural profession. And this legacy has been passed to the next generation. Son Ben

Heimsath, AIA, whose focus is group dynamics, joined the family business right out of Harvard; Eric MacInerary, AIA, another Harvard alum who also joined the firm right out of school, was initially trained as an engineer and enjoys exploring technology issues; and Sandy Stone, AIA, a graduate of UT Austin, has an expertise in historic preservation and interior design. Although the staff has expanded and contracted with the economy over the years, the practice is still sized so the principals can continue being involved daily with each project.

**Clovis recalls** a major turning point in the firm's history. During the recession of 1984, when there were few opportunities for architectural work, Heimsath Architects had an inner-office summit meeting to be proactive in the crisis. Discussions focused on why they were in business. The brain trust determined they should concentrate on churches — a natural building type specialty since Clovis' father had been a minister. This decision ended up being the silver lining to the economic hard times as documented by an article Ben wrote for *AIA Memo* (February, 1991) in which he described the adversity's consolation being responsible for the firm's new-found liturgical building-type focus.

From decades of experience with churches, the firm has developed an effective approach to designing with a group for a client. A day-long workshop is the first part of Heimsath Architects' standard design process. It grew out of frustration with a congregation's stakeholders who stalled the design process because they couldn't agree amongst themselves what they should do. Patterned after churches' "retreats" held away from their place of worship and without distractions, the workshops offered a way to reach consensus through needs assessments and programming exercises. Ben shepherds this process drawing on his political skills from his days as a young page in Washington for legendary Congressman J.J. Pickle. This day-long inclusive exercise produces a building program that has the collective buy-in from all the stakeholders. The resulting program and design concept is turned over to one of the architects to continue to refine the design with ongoing input from the entire team.

Though technology has become a barrier for many older architects, it has actually resulted in fuller participation for Clovis. The young octogenarian has made the transition, as he describes it, from sequential logic — from plan



to elevations to perspectives (as he was trained at Yale) — to simultaneous logic as he constructs a model on his computer. He says the increased knowledge and the fewer surprises in three-dimensional imaging are the payoff for CAD programs, particularly BIM programs such as Archi-CAD used by the office. It's an unusual attitude for someone who spends his free time as an oil painter in his studio in Fayetteville, and who still produces watercolor and pen-and-ink presentation drawings for the office.

To explain his appreciation of today's three-dimensional modeling, Clovis tells the story of a client who, years ago — having received a watercolor perspective of their house, which they loved — requested a different view. Being the agreeable service professional, he was happy to respond to their request, but they would have to wait a week to get it, for it would require a hand-drawn three-point perspective and a complete new rendering. Today, he points out, you can change or modify the image of a three-dimensional model in seconds, or use the computer model for a real-time walk through of the design. Clovis now makes a wire-frame print-out of the computer image and transfers this onto watercolor paper allowing the new watercolor to begin immediately. Looking back on the many pen-and-ink sketches Clovis made during his Fulbright in Rome, he feels that while they were great sketches and watercolors, they did not do what a computer model today can do — see the building from more than one vantage point. Clovis uses CAD to participate in making early studies, and contribute to a collaborative office approach. Heimsath Architects applies the

collective creativity from their client workshop to their own inner-office design development process — clearly practicing what they preach.

One day a week, Clovis and Maryann know they'll be making the Fayetteville/Austin round-trip drive to work where they eagerly participate in the firm they started in 1959. When Clovis wakes up the other four days of the work week, he doesn't know if he's going to be an architect or a painter. In that sense, Clovis Heimsath, FAIA, is a testament to architecture being a calling and not a profession; his practice and his lifestyle are seamless.

Lawrence Connolly, AIA, is principal of Connolly Architects in Austin.




**Above** At Heimsath Architects, watercolor renderings complement computer-generated drawings.

**Left** Looking in on Country Place Hotel in Fayetteville.



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## Trends of the Trade



*South Shore Central could provide more pedestrian connectivity, better public access to the waterfront, sustainable infrastructure, and a high quality urban realm.*

### AIA STAD Program and Report for Austin's South Shore Central

AIA Austin was proud to partner with the City of Austin and six other consultants chosen to participate in AIA's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) program. This program brought a team of sustainable design experts to Austin to work with the local community in June 2012 to imagine a sustainable future for the South Shore Central area of the waterfront. Many AIA Austin members volunteered their expertise in helping with the design charrette.

The AIA's Center for Communities by Design issued the final SDAT report in October 2012. This report provides independent recommendations on how the "South Shore Central area can redevelop to provide for more pedestrian connectivity, better public access to the waterfront, sustainable infrastructure, and a high quality urban realm."

The SDAT report is providing an important component to inform another exciting urban planning initiative — the Sustainable Places Project. This project is developing a custom computer analytic tool to model a battery of sustainable impacts of urban design scenarios. The SDAT report will be used to help calibrate the development of this tool for analyzing future scenarios for the South Shore Central.

### 2012 Charles E. Peterson Prize

A student team from the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture was recently awarded the 2012 Charles E. Peterson Prize. The award is sponsored by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, and the American Institute of Architects. It recognizes excellence in measured drawings prepared to HABS standards and donated to HABS by students.

The students submitted measured drawings of Austin's North-Evan Chateau (1874-1960), now the Chateau Bellevue. The team included Jessica Anderson, Serena Bollinger, Kalan Contreras, Yuanjing Du, Betsy Frederick-Rothwell, Thomas Garcia, Andreea Hamilton, Rebecca Lapham, Julie McGilvray, Emily Ray, Samantha Smith, Miriam Tworek-Hofstetter, Payal Vora, and Katherine Yester. Their instructors were Monica Penick, Carl Matthews, and Michael Holleran.

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*AIA COTE is currently accepting nominations for the 2012 Top Ten Green Projects Awards and the new Top Ten + Awards.*

## Deadline for Submission to the AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE) Top Ten and Top Ten +

The AIA Committee on the Environment is currently accepting nominations for the 2013 AIA COTE Top Ten Green Projects Awards. The awards program recognizes exemplary and innovative built projects that establish a standard of excellence in sustainable design, demonstrate its benefits, and educate both the profession and the public.

**All submissions must** be received by 8:00 p.m. eastern standard time on January 25, 2013. All architects licensed in the U.S. are invited to submit their completed built projects, regardless of project size, budget, style, building type, or location. Entries are welcomed and encouraged from both established and new practitioners and designers, and from small firms and large.

New buildings and renovations/restorations are eligible. Projects must be built and completed after 2003 and at least three months prior to the submission deadline. "Completion" is synonymous with "substantial completion" as defined in the standard AIA documents governing construction.

The entry is to be submitted by the architect. The submitting architect may qualify as a member of a design team, whether or not serving as the head of the team. When one architect is not the sole author, all other participants contributing substantially to the design of the project must be given credit as part of the submission, regardless of professional discipline. Project authorship must remain anonymous during jury deliberations. If authorship is revealed on any submission materials — images, plans, or narrative — the entry will be disqualified. A project that credits any 2013 AIA COTE Top Ten Green Projects Awards jury member or his/her firm as architect, associate architect, consultant, or client is ineligible and will be disqualified if submitted.





## Invest in Yourself and Your Career

Renew your American Institute of Architects (AIA) membership by March 31, 2013, to continue to receive important member benefits at the national, state, and local levels while supporting the profession. Membership in the AIA is a three-tier structure, which provides benefits at all levels. AIA members work together to develop and share resources essential for modern practice.

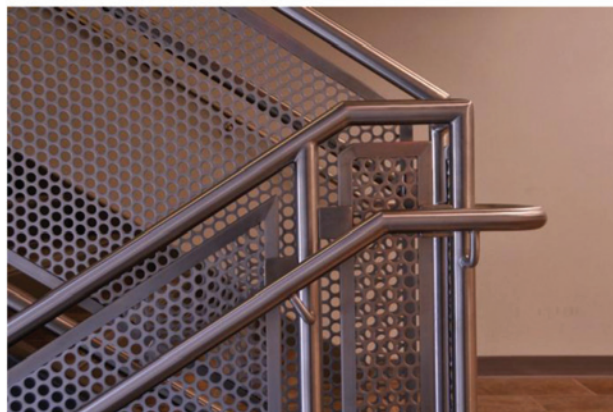
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**In addition,** as an AIA member you receive reduced convention registration rates at both state and national levels; informative online and print communications such as *Texas Architect*, *CheckSet*, advocacy updates, and more. The renewal period closes March 31. After this date, you will be considered a lapsed member and will lose the AIA designation, member-login privileges for [www.texasarchitects.org](http://www.texasarchitects.org), and a host of other opportunities to stay connected and engaged with your colleagues and the profession. ■

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## The Bike Shed

by Canan Yetmen

**L**ike too many businesses, paychecks and credit lines in recent years, even the not-so-big-house has been downsized. Tiny houses and their offspring — granny pods, nanny pods and micro-units — are the current darlings of the design world. But in our post-recession reality, the tiny house trend doesn't only touch our desire to do more with less, it proves that soaring and inspired design is accessible in daily life. In fact, it will easily fit right in your own backyard.

In a changing South Austin neighborhood, Minguell-McQuary Architecture+Design's Bike Shed is an addition to a humble ranch house of a certain age. In many ways the Bike Shed represents the image Austin has cultivated: young, hip, innovative. But in reality, the simple building — an object with everyday uses — embodies a much larger design ethos that takes its cues from the past even as it keeps one eye focused

*In such a small space, each gesture is meaningful, deliberate and responsive to a problem or lifestyle possibility.*

on the future. "We try to see buildings as Mies or Khan would, as a holistic system that solves problems," says Jose Minguell. "Any particular solution will inform the overall composition and vice versa. We believe that architectural history has evolved and that buildings such as barns and sheds carry this knowledge within them."

Originally intended as a simple storage building for a collection of high-end bicycles, its program expanded to include sleeping quarters, a kitchen and/or bathroom (it does both at the same time) as well as storage. Minguell and

Laura McQuary created a simple volume, then boiled the space down to its essence, strengthened the connection to the context and site, and created a vitality and energy through the careful, nuanced use of angles and materials.

The juxtaposition flows throughout the roughly 500-sf building. It feels at once open and intimate. It connects to the original house while gently protecting its views from neighbors. It is likewise deceptively simple yet complex in its function — at once office and bedroom, kitchen and bath, display and storage. In such a small space, each gesture is meaningful, deliberate and responsive to a problem or lifestyle possibility. It takes on the usual challenge to "be flexible" with both grace and guts, daring to push the boundaries without making a scene. McQuary explains it this way, "We try not to establish hierarchies or force relationships between functions and programs of space. We like the idea of the user having the freedom to discover them. At the same time we try to define the spaces and create a strong sense of place through the volumetric and material dynamism."

If, as Mies said, architecture is the will of the age conceived in spatial terms, the Bike Shed clearly embodies the spirit of our times. But it is more than just going back to basics or dusting off truths we already know. It proves once again that less really is more. Square-foot for square-foot, the lithe and nimble Bike Shed outshines and outsmarts the looming and plodding McMansions down the street, elegantly re-stitching and re-energizing the existing neighborhood fabric.

More like this, please.

Formerly publisher of *TA*, Canan Yetmen is principal of CYMK Group in Austin.

*The compact living space has ample light and tall ceilings. The kitchen is situated to the rear of the bike wall. The center-pivot casement windows allow for a seamless transition from the exterior to the interior as well as easy passage for the bikes.*



PHOTOS BY JOSE MINGUELL





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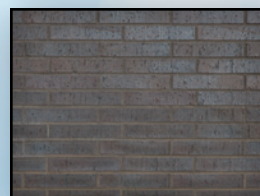
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